JOHN HUS

M. N. SCHWEIZER

Central BAPTIST
THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

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JOHN HUS
The Martyr of Bohemia

John Hus in the Pulpit of Bethlehem Chapel, Prague. (Ad. Liebscher.) See page 34

JOHN HUS

The Martyr of Bohemia

A Study of the Dawn of Protestantism

By

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Foreword

MANY volumes have been written on the life and times of John Hus. They deal with various phases of the activity of the Bohemian Reformer and the conditions of his day. Not a few of them are exhaustive treatises that have brought to light a mass of valuable detail found in a variety of documentary sources. They give more clear and distinct outline to the person of John Hus and make possible a more just estimate of his activity. All Hus literature is invested with new interest, in view of the five hundredth anniversary of the martyr death of this reformer on July 6, 1415. Arrangements are being very generally made to signalize that occasion with worthy observance. Hence, the call for a book that, written concisely and in popular style, will give the general reader or the member of study class or group a clear conception of the life and ministry of Hus and the great issues with which his life-work was bound up.

In these pages the attempt is made to sketch briefly the life, character and work of the Martyr of Bohemia, as these appear to be related to the significant ideas and tendencies of his day. I have endeavoured to write with historical accuracy, yet without suppressing judgment of the facts presented concerning the careers and proceedings of the characters and councils that are passed in review. In working out the narrative on this plan, I have consulted all the best known authorities on the subject as well as various volumes dealing with conditions and events connected with the subject. Most useful among

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the authorities studied have been the following: "Geschichte von Böhmen," F. Palacky; "The Life and Times of John Hus," E. H. Gillett; "The Life and Times of Master John Hus," Count Lützow; "Bohemia," Count Lützow; "The Letters of John Hus," Herbert E. Workman and A. Martin Pope; "Heroes of Bohemia," John W. Mears; "History of the Unitas Fratrum," Edmund de Schweinitz; "A History of the Moravian Church," J. E. Hutton.

I am indebted to the Rev. A. D. Thaeler, of Bethlehem, Penna., for collecting and arranging the illustrations, to the Rev. John S. Romig, of Philadelphia, for furnishing several of the photographs used, and to both gentlemen for helpful suggestions. The task of preparing this volume has been a labour of love. If to the view of readers the figure of Hus shall appear more distinctly in the perspective of history, if the moral wealth of the Church of all ages shall be better appreciated and the debt of later workers to an earlier labourer on the rising temple of God more fairly recognized, the effort will be amply rewarded.

W. N. Schwarze.

Bethlehem, Pa.

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I

THE HOME AND TIMES OF JOHN HUS

BOHEMIA. Bohemia was the home of John Hus and the scene of his labours. It is one of the smallest of the famous countries of the world. Embracing an area of twenty thousand square miles, it is no larger than the two states of New Hampshire and Vermont combined. It enjoys, however, a situation that has always been favourable to self-development and the wielding of influence, for Bohemia lies diamond-shaped in the heart of Europe. Its boundaries are defended by mountain ramparts and the angles of the gigantic diagram, directed to the four points of the compass, are protected by rocky bastions. The position of the country is, therefore, central and separate. Bohemia forms a continent within the continent of Europe, as Goethe has well expressed it. Thus centrally located, like a natural fortress, this land has been styled by military authorities the "key" to modern Europe. Field of many battles, it was the centre of the terrible and lurid tragedy of the Thirty Years' War, and it has supplied from among native sons not a few great warriors. Holding strategic position, it goes with the saying of it, that historically, also, the country is of importance. It has a record of much past greatness. It has been convulsed by questions of its own raising. And, what is of special interest to the present consideration, it anticipated by a century of brave struggle the general Reformation of the sixteenth century.

Resources of Bohemia. Bohemia is a land of charm and of plenty. In this little country every variety of scenery, almost every geological formation and every mineral, except salt and platinum, can be found. Precious stones are among its treasures, notably, fine opals. Mineral springs abound. The fame of Carlsbad and Marienbad is spread over the world. Copious streams, flowing down from the mountains, carry fertility and freshness to every part of the land. The meadows are rich and the fields fruitful. Sheltered by the mountain ranges, the climate is genial. While separated from neighbouring lands by the chains of mountains, the country is not isolated. By means of the River Elbe, which makes its way out of Bohemia through a rugged gorge on the Saxon frontier and thence flows to the German Ocean, Bohemia is connected directly with the great cities and powers outside. Through this great artery of European commerce, the country has been accessible to all that was useful and improving. Yet its own resources have always been sufficient to stimulate industry and independence. And it has been so far secluded by nature as to encourage the patriotic effort to maintain and cherish its own proper character, customs and institutions.

People of Bohemia. Various peoples have inhabited fair Bohemia. Recent researches show it to be probable that, at least, part of the country supported a Slavic population as early as the beginning of the Christian era or even for several centuries before that time. Other early inhabitants were different tribes of Celtic or Teutonic stock. Prominent among these were the Boii, or "the terrible ones," from whom the country received its name. About the middle of the fifth century there came from eastern Europe into Bohemia the Czechs, a vigorous and high-minded people, the most gifted of the Slavonic

tribes. They proved to be the permanent settlers. Remnants of earlier peoples they either dispossessed or subdued. Of their early history we know little. Their social and political institutions and customs were of the most primitive nature. Their religious ideas are shrouded in obscurity. From their later history it appears that they had the true Slavonic nature, which is like the Celtic represented in our day by the Irish. They had fiery Slavonic blood in their veins. They were capable of great outbursts of enthusiasm and violent quarrels and disputations. They had all the dash, zeal and imagination characteristic of the Slavonic peoples. They were easy to stir, swift to act, witty in speech, mystic and poetic in soul. Like the Irish of to-day, they revelled in the joy and fascination of party politics. Into the discussion of religious questions they entered with the keenest zest. For this combination of qualities they have been by some greatly praised, by others as heartily denounced.

These racial characteristics were intensified and, at the same time, the national spirit and feeling of the Czechs were strengthened when rival settlers came into the country. By consulting a map of Europe it will be seen that Bohemia is almost surrounded by German speaking states. It was only natural, therefore, that Germans should, sooner or later, press into the country. They began to intrude upon the Czechs in the sixth and seventh centuries. As they acquired influence and power, struggles, on a greater or smaller scale, ensued and continued to occur on all sorts of issues. Indeed, many of the religious conflicts of later days were mixed with and embittered by these national feuds. To the present day Czechs and Germans make up the population of Bohemia, in the proportion of two-thirds and one-third, respectively. They have not yet learned to dwell together in perfect peace and harmony.

Czechs and Fourteenth Century Movements in Europe. A people as susceptible as were the Czechs and as centrally located as they happened to be in Bohemia would be strongly affected by any noteworthy influences that might be stirring in the great world about them. Now with the opening of the fourteenth century, signs began to appear that the medieval Romish Church system was breaking up. It had held the human mind bound in fetters for ages. Various causes were operating in the direction of its overthrow. These consisted in significant movements and ideas that had been taking shape and gathering force for some time. Hostility towards the Romish Church had begun with the prosperity of that church. The suffering early Church had given to humanity, in the Christian martyrs, some of the noblest types of confessors and witnesses. When the Emperor Constantine, in the fourth century, granted great authority and riches to the Church, a sudden change took place. The contrast between the martyrs of the year 313 A. D. and the wealthy, worldly bishops of a great Church Council that met a dozen years later impressed thoughtful and devout people disagreeably. That impression was deepened to steady and determined opposition as the power of the Church constantly increased and the idea was emphasized that a priest, in virtue of his office, is superior to a layman. The barrier between the clergy and the laity was built up by the practice of withholding the cup from the laymen in the Holy Communion, by the celibacy of the clergy and by the assumption that the authorities of the Church, as represented in the Romish hierarchy or in the Council, had the power to force doctrines of their own creation on the Church.

All this roused protest. And the protest ripened to deadly animosity when the clergy, in spite of their claims, became corrupt, indolent, ignorant and ineffi-

cient. At the time of which we write the evils and corruption of the Church reached their very worst stage when there occurred what is known as the schism in the popedom. Two men were, at the same time, each claiming to be the true pope. One had his court at Avignon, in France, the other at Rome. The excitement at this schism was intense throughout all Christendom. The minds of men were completely unsettled at the unseemly spectacle of shameful rivalry in the highest office in the Church. Each pope claimed to be the true representative of Christ on earth. Each had powerful and enthusiastic followers. Each hurled terrible curses at the head of the other. Each styled the other a son of Belial and described him as a heretic, a thief, a despot, a traitor. And the pity of it was that they were not far wrong in what they said about each other.

As a result of the claims and the degeneracy of the clergy, the Church had lost her hold upon the affections of the people and her power to foster living faith. Sermons that the people could understand were rare. The Bible was known to few. Services that were held in parish churches had, in too many instances, become mere senseless shows. Most of the clergy never preached at all and they were no longer examples to their flocks. They hunted, they gambled, they caroused. It is no wonder that, for some centuries preceding the fourteenth, men had been losing faith in almost everything but material force. The empire had been built up and maintained by force. Soldiers of fortune had, again and again, settled national disputes. The appeal to the sword and the right of the strongest had supplanted every other. Even the popes had shown more faith in the temporal sword, which they employed constantly, than in their own edicts and decrees. Amid the clash of arms other voices were drowned. Of course, a reaction was bound

to set in. It slowly gained strength, sometimes in silence and again amid the noise of storms, until at last it burst forth as an overwhelming flood. Men began to think for themselves and not as the Church commanded. The time had come when the force of free religious thought was to be manifested on a broader scale and more conspicuously than ever before. A noteworthy writer, Marsiglio of Padua, in his "Defensor Pacis," defined the Church as being the community of all who believe in Christ, be they priests or laymen. That was a very revolutionary conception for the times. An issue was drawn which still separates Protestantism from Romanism. The authority of the Bible as the standard and norm of faith was set up against the claim of the Church to promulgate doctrines of her own creation.

Moreover, the empire of ideas was notably enlarged. Very generally, when men contend for freedom of religious thought, they, also, fight for liberty of conscience and civil liberty. The period under consideration was no exception to the rule. Superficial observers might look with contempt on the utterances and writings of obscure preachers and authors on these subjects. They might look to the leaders of armies to deal with the agitation that was unsettling all religious and civil and social institutions and customs. Vain alike their scoffing and their expectation. It was soon to become clear that on the chess-board of European history monarchs might be merely pawns, while the real kings were the men of thought, the scholars, the scientists, the patriotic leaders, the theologians, the reformers. One of the many great ideas these men urged was that there should be a return to the simplicity of the primitive Church.

Czechs Receptive Because of Their Religious History. For such ideas and contentions that were

abroad the Bohemians were peculiarly receptive. Their whole experience and history as a nation had prepared them so to be. As stated above, little is known of the early history of the Czechs after their settlement in Bohemia. From the ninth century onward more is recorded of them. In that period the light of the Gospel shone into the darkness of superstition that covered them. For the missionary interest of Christianity reached out to Bohemia in the middle of the ninth century. It proceeded from both the Roman and the Greek Churches, a little earlier from the former but with much more vigorous expression from the latter. As the Christianizing effort of the Roman Church was introduced through the agency of the Germans, it was not likely to gain many adherents, because the Christian faith was by the Bohemians connected with the hostile German race. But when a Christian prince of Bohemia sent messengers to the Greek Emperor at Constantinople, asking that he send Christian teachers of the Slavonic race to Bohemia, and when that appeal met with prompt response, then Christianity completely and permanently penetrated the country. The brothers Cyrill (also known as Constantine) and Methodius were the missionaries that came. They were men of extraordinary ability and considerable experience. They had in their youth turned their backs on tempting worldly prospects. Before coming to Bohemia they had gained noteworthy missionary successes in Bulgaria and elsewhere. Their methods were calculated to open a way for the Gospel into the hearts of the Czechs. They translated the Scriptures into their language, for which they had invented an alphabet. A marked feature of their work was the use of the language of the people, not only in giving instruction but, also, in public worship. Establishing many churches, they built up a church organization in which the Czechs felt at home.

Thus was laid the foundation of that national church feeling and the liberal principles which thenceforward distinguished the Bohemians and Moravians—the Czechs had also occupied the small margraviate of Moravia to the southeast of Bohemia. They were animated by a spirit akin to that which later manifested itself as Protestantism.

Roman popes were not indifferent to these developments. On the ground of the prior claims of the Roman Church, they used every means at their command to bring the church of Bohemia and Moravia under their control. Towards the close of the eleventh century, when their power was increasing all over Europe, their scheming and zealotry were crowned with success. Bohemia and Moravia became subject to the Roman See. Gradually the Slavonic ritual fell into disuse. The language of the people was no longer employed in public worship. The prejudices of the period demanded that the Latin language and the Roman ritual should be exclusively used. But the impression left in the minds of the people in favour of the use of the popular language for religious purposes was never wiped out. That impression with the characteristic tenacity of the Bohemians was kept alive through two centuries. The hearts of the people clung to the customs of the fathers. All the more did they do so, because Rome forced upon them its fully developed priestly system. This, by requiring the celibacy of the clergy, denying the cup in Holy Communion to the laity and insisting upon the idea that the priests were necessary mediators between God and the people, established the clergy as a caste apart from the laity. The people, more or less clearly, resented the idea that they could not come into contact with God without the aid of the priests. They cultivated a fervent devotion to the cup. For this they have sometimes been misunder-

stood and ridiculed. A great and true idea was involved. For them the cup was the emblem, signifying the equality of all true Christians. Such a religious history supplies various reasons why the general opposition to the papacy, caused by the awful schism and the scandalous conduct of the clergy, was stronger in Bohemia than elsewhere and in that country had earlier and weighty results. It seemed only to wait for a suitable moment and a brave leader to break out into open rebellion.

Czechs Prepared by Their National Spirit for New Ideas. The same influences that tended to counteract the grasping and domineering policy of Rome nurtured the national and patriotic spirit. As indicated above, this had been fostered in other ways for a long time. Now, in the period immediately preceding the entrance of Hus upon his public career, it gained a remarkable development. It reacted powerfully on the Romish practices and in its own way prompted the people to an eager welcome of the great new ideas that were abroad. What these promised would be peculiarly grateful and attractive to any people who were animated by a strong national and patriotic spirit.

Czechs Prepared Intellectually for the New Ideas. In still another way the Czechs were prepared for appreciation of and participation in the great intellectual and religious movements of the time. The middle of the fourteenth century brought to the throne of Bohemia King Charles, who, a little later, became the Emperor Charles IV of the German empire. However unequal he may have been to his imperial position, Bohemia he loved and made the object of his constant care. Under his guidance it entered a golden age. Agricultural and commercial prosperity was furthered. Justice was faith-

fully administered. Industry was developed and the manufacture of the beautiful Bohemian glass begun. But above and beyond all these features of his reign, one of his undertakings was particularly important to the present consideration, viz., the establishment of the University of Prague, in 1348. This was the first university of the German empire and the only one for half a century. So great a success was this institution, that as many as seven thousand students were in attendance at one time. So fine was its scholastic character and influence, that it shared with the Universities of Oxford and Paris the distinction of being one of the most illustrious seats of learning in Europe. Scholars of all countries were invited to come to it. Thousands of native sons improved the opportunities afforded by it. So powerful was its influence in wakening the intellectual life of the people, that, with the other favouring conditions of the time working in the same direction, it placed Bohemia in advance of the surrounding nations in literary and industrial activity.

New Ideas Come to Expression in Bohemia. The ideas that had thus grown upon Bohemia and those that had been imported from abroad and had here ripened to definiteness more quickly than elsewhere soon came to vigorous expression. Men of sagacity, eloquence and daring zeal arose, preachers of righteousness gave voice to what was generally felt. They began to point the direction into which the sentiments and efforts of the people should be turned. They anticipated Hus in the utterance of views of Scriptural reform. They are known as his forerunners. They encouraged the people in the disposition to work for reform. They were champions of the truth. And they proved to be the heralds of the reformer, through whom the intellectual and religious movement in Bohemia of the fourteenth century was turned into the

channel of a national reformation. Several of them are worthy of special notice.

Conrad Waldhauser. The first of these, interestingly enough, was a German, Conrad Waldhauser. He came to Bohemia from Vienna, upon the invitation of the Emperor Charles. The latter, always mindful of the welfare of his people in Bohemia and distressed by the state of the Bohemian clergy, had heard of Waldhauser's success in Vienna, and forthwith urged him to come to Prague. This man's eyes had been opened while on a pilgrimage to Rome. He returned thence a zealous preacher of repentance. In Prague his eloquent sermons produced a deep impression. His congregations grew so large that no building could hold them and they were forced to assemble in a market-place. He was appointed rector of the Thein Church, next to the Cathedral of St. Vitus, the largest and most important in Prague. The results of his calm, clear, forceful preaching were wonderful. In the hearts of many of his hearers radical changes were effected. A notorious usurer returned his ill-earned gains. The women of Prague, struck by his denunciation of luxury and vanity, discarded their fine clothing and jewelry and adopted a plainer and more modest dress. Certain well-known sinners were induced to come and do penance in public. Many Jews even were his ready hearers. With the monks he soon came into conflict. He upbraided them for their avarice, dishonesty and other vices. They turned hotly against him. But their plots failed and their accusations collapsed before the purity of his life. The state of Prague became like that of a modern town during an effective revival meeting. And we here meet, for the first time, with one of those outbreaks of religious enthusiasm that are henceforth so frequent in the annals of Prague.

Milic of Kremsier. Among those who listened to Waldhauser's sermons was a young priest, who was destined to become his successor in the arduous path of church-reform. This was Milic of Kremsier, whose truly Christlike nature caused him to be revered as a saint even during his lifetime. Early in life he showed that great capacity for work and study that is characteristic of his entire career. He devoted much time to the study of the Scriptures. Indeed, this devotion to the Bible may be considered as generally characteristic of the Bohemian church-reformers. A man of marked ability, he seemed singled out for a career of popularity and promotion in the church. But from conscientious motives he suddenly renounced his honors and dignities, intending to live in complete poverty and for the one purpose of preaching the Gospel. He held to his determination. As he had been born in Moravia, he spoke the language of the country. He acquired, also, a thorough knowledge of German and Latin. Using all these languages, his preaching exerted wider influence than had that of Waldhauser, whom towards the end of his life he succeeded as rector of the Thein Church. The corruption of the times seems to have inspired him with the idea that the end of the world was near and that Antichrist would soon appear. As his denunciations of evils were bold and terrific, the monks were only too glad to seize on what were considered his errors of teaching. Yet they did not prevail against him, so great an affection did the people cherish for him and so deeply were all thoughtful people impressed with his sincerity.

After a visit which he paid to Rome, he laid less stress on his peculiar views concerning Antichrist, but his zeal for the reform of the Church became even greater. Not content with preaching himself, he wished to train others for the work. He established a kind of school of the

The Thein Church

John Hus

prophets. Two or three hundred young men submitted themselves to his instruction and training. He copied books for them to study and engaged them to multiply his copies, his aim being to extend the circulation of devotional and instructive books. His influence, exerted directly or through his pupils, was extensive. His activity had both its positive and its negative side. He protested against the worship of pictures and the idolatry practiced with relics; he, also, drew up forms of prayer for worship in the native language—these prayers were widely adopted. He denounced the vices of the time; he, also, raised the fallen and started many wretched sinners on the pathway of honest, useful living. This brief outline of his life and labours may close with an estimate given of him by a famous Bohemian historian, "He stirred the spirit of the people to its depths, and first caused it to rise to those waves which, at a later time and with the coöperation of new elements, grew to be the billows of a great storm."

Thomas of Stitny. Some of the little band of Bohemian church reformers were laymen. One of these, Thomas of Stitny, deserves to be mentioned as a man whose influence worked in a different direction. He was one of the lesser nobility. Having made the most of his course at the university, he retired to his father's castle, exchanged the sword for the pen and published numerous books and treatises for the instruction of his family and his countrymen. The ideas and theories which he developed in them, thoroughly devout and Scriptural, penetrated widely among the nobility and landowners of Bohemia, men who afterwards took a prominent part in the great struggles during and after the lifetime of Hus. Stitny's merits as a writer are great. He was the first to employ the national language as a medium for the discus-

sion of theological and practical questions. In this respect he was a true forerunner of Hus, who, in addition to his other services, did much for the development of the language of his country.

There were other men, little less conspicuous in the cause of Scriptural knowledge and reform. Hus mentions to their honour a half dozen of them in one of his sermons. We consider briefly but one more.

Matthew of Janov. The last and greatest of the forerunners of Hus was Matthew of Janov. Following in the footsteps of Waldhauser and Milic, he eventually took position in advance of them. Distinguished for his learning, which he acquired at the Universities of Prague and Paris, as well as for his experience of bitter inward struggle before he came to the point of self-denial, he used both his knowledge and his experience in bravely promoting the truth. He was a writer and not a preacher. His special merit is that as a learned theologian he greatly influenced the masters of the university, which soon after the death of Hus became supreme arbitrator on religious matters in Bohemia. In his writings, Janov showed a remarkable familiarity with Scripture. He rejected the authority of human traditions and put in their place the supreme authority of the divine word. He tried everything by that test. Hence, his position was bold and evangelical. His writings breathed, also, gospel simplicity and charity. He approached more nearly than did any of his predecessors to what later became known as the Protestant standpoint. His views of the necessity and manner of reform were correspondingly clear and comprehensive. He understood fully the difficulties with which it would have to contend. And he proposed to overcome them by sound and Scriptural methods. He had lost his faith in the Romish Church and desired to revive the

simple Christianity of the apostles. "I consider it essential," he wrote, "to root out all weeds, to restore the Word of God on earth, to bring back the Church of Christ to its original, healthy, condensed condition, and to keep only such regulations as date from the time of the apostles." "All the works of men," he added, "their ceremonies and traditions shall soon be totally destroyed; the Lord Jesus shall alone be exalted and His word shall stand forever." The truths which he set forth were a trumpet blast that announced the coming of a Reformation and the dawn of a new epoch.

What has been said of these men will suffice to show that a work had begun in Bohemia which could not pause. Seed had been sown, truth had been scattered. The new ideas that had been thrown out were to prove a powerful leaven. The eyes of men are naturally attracted to any great array of physical forces, to armies and fleets. But it is shallow thinking that overlooks the influence of the teachers of great doctrines. Ideas are mightier than swords or bayonets.

Wyclif's Writings Come to Bohemia. At this time, when the minds of men in Bohemia were stirred, the writings of Wyclif were brought to Bohemia and added fuel to the fire. They came through the agency of students, who in those days were accustomed to pass from one university to the others, taking with them whatever might be of interest in one institution to the rest. The writings of "The Morning Star of the Reformation"—as Wyclif is known—came, also, through the instrumentality of a Bohemian princess. Anne of Luxemburg, daughter of Bohemia's honoured King Charles, was married to King Richard II of England, in 1382. Received in England with magnificent ceremony and festivity, she came to be known as Good Queen Anne, by reason of her many

excellent qualities. She brought to the land of her adoption the liberal spirit that was abroad in her native country. She was, therefore, prepared to receive and cherish the Scriptural teachings of Wyclif and communicate them to her countrymen. This reformer had asserted that the pope was not to be obeyed unless his commands agree with the Scriptures. He had denounced the whole Catholic priestly system and attacked the errors of Romish doctrine.

Thus step by step the way was prepared for the coming reformation in Bohemia. There was strong patriotic feeling, there was dislike of foreign priests, there was growing love for the Bible, there was scorn for the degenerate clergy, there was great activity of wakened minds, there was anxious inquiry and discussion, there was a vague desire to return to the simplicity of primitive Christianity. Now there was needed a great personality that could gather the scattered beams and throw them forward in a broad shaft of burning light. It must of necessity be one who would be able to think, able to speak, able to stand by conviction. Such a man was found in John Hus, the influence of whose work, stretching noticeably through five centuries of national and religious history, entitle him to be regarded as the greatest Czech Bohemia has ever produced.

II

THE YOUTH AND EARLY WORK OF HUS

GREAT Qualities of Hus. Hus possessed the qualities of a great popular leader. Identifying himself with the strong movements of the time, his personality quickly forged to the front. On the great questions of the time he came to be the representative man of his nation. Through his instrumentality, the new ideas were turned into the channel of a national reformation that preceded, by a whole century, the general Reformation. His individuality was largely the cause of the momentous events that have rendered his name famous. His self-renouncement, the fearless courage with which he met moral and physical pain of every kind for the cause that he believed to be of God, his comprehensive learning, his enthusiastic devotion to the national interests, his striking and popular eloquence made the way for him to the side of the great celebrities of his age.

Youth of Hus. Of his youth little is known; of his later years we have numerous and varied accounts. It cannot be stated positively in what year Hus was born. Some authorities give it as 1369, others as 1373. He was born in the village of Husinec, near the small town of Prachatice, in the southern part of Bohemia, close to the Bavarian border. The place of his birth is so far deserving of notice, as the racial strife which plays so great a part in Bohemian history always raged most fiercely where the domains of German and Bohemian meet. Fur-

thermore, the future reformer took his name from his native place, being known first as John Hus of Husinec, later simply as John Hus. This was in accordance with the custom of the times. Many of the distinguished contemporaries of Hus in Bohemia, or elsewhere, are known by the names of the places where they were born or where they were educated. The family name of Hus is not known. His parents were peasants of scanty means. They endeavoured to give John, who was his mother's favourite son, a good education. He had brothers and sisters. Nothing is known of them, except that about the sons of a brother he manifested a touching concern even during the last days of his life. If we may judge of his home-training from the fruits it bore, it must have been characterized by affectionate anxiety and a severe purity of morals. Rarely has a character been subjected to more severe or bitter scrutiny, on the part of friend or foe, than was that of Hus in later days. Yet in the long catalogue of accusations brought against him not one affected his character. There is not even a trace of youthful folly or excess. It may be supposed that in his noble simplicity and unassailed purity of life were reflected the quiet virtues of his childhood's home, a home of peace, gentleness and love.

Education of Hus. John Hus was first sent to a school in his native place. This was conducted in a monastery. The monks noted the quick intelligence of the boy. At their suggestion he was sent to a school of higher grade in the neighbouring town of Prachatice. Here he won the praise of his teachers. His rapid progress gave high promise of future distinction.

His course at Prachatice completed, he returned to his widowed mother. "What shall we now do, my son?" she asked. "I am going to Prague," was his reply, for

the fire of learning was burning in his bosom. Thus, at his own instance, he went to the university. That institution was then in its most flourishing state. It was characterized by unexampled enterprise and intellectual activity. The new spirit of inquiry and the great thirst for knowledge, that were diffused abroad, brought many eager and brilliant minds to this distinguished seat of learning. Popular movements that had taken place in almost every kingdom in Europe showed that society, even in its lower strata, was restless, eager for knowledge. Many eminent men were in the several faculties of the university. Hus makes appreciative mention of a number of them in a commemorative discourse preached later in life. They improved the peculiar privileges of the university and made it a Bohemian republic of letters, the authority of which was widely respected. It was pervaded by a literary spirit, active, keen, thorough, delighting in disputations on the grandest scale—disputations on the moral, political and religious questions of the day. It embraced four faculties, one for theology, one for law, one for medicine, one for philosophy.

A school such as this inspired Hus with enthusiasm. He became one of its lights. Of his student years we have but scanty information. Being the son of poor people, he was no stranger to the sufferings of poverty, even of hunger, and he was often obliged to sleep on the bare ground. It is not unlikely that he was received for a time into the house of one of the professors, where he was employed in service and received in return food and clothing and, at the same time, enjoyed access to a large and select library. He endeavoured, as he tells us himself, to add to his limited means by acting as singing boy at religious services.

He appears to have taken part in the rough games of his fellow students, though at the university he always

bore an excellent character. Ever a severe judge of himself, he laments, at a later period, his youthful levity, the time he wasted in playing chess and his inability to lose a game without anger. Such reproaches, as in the case of Cromwell, Bunyan and the Puritans in general, are rather the evidence of a tender conscience than of any depravity of heart. He, on the other hand, takes trouble to conceal the strenuous work and bitter self-renunciation which were the principal features of his student life at Prague. At the same time, it must be remembered that greatness and faults are inseparable. We must not expect the record of Hus to be spotless. Among his fellow students he found excellent companions who became firm friends and close associates later on. His pure character led him to associate with earnest seekers after truth and with those whose hearts God had touched. His affability of disposition, gentleness towards all, unassuming manner, earnestness, truthfulness, self-denial—qualities which in after years even his bitterest enemies conceded —endeared him to all. "Meanly born but of no mean spirit," was the characterization of one of his opponents. His zeal for acquaintance with the career and pursuits of those to whom he might look as models amounted almost to a passion. That he soon became famed among his fellows for his piety is shown by a story that is told of his student days. It is related that Hus had, when reading the legend of St. Lawrence who was roasted alive in an iron chair, asked himself whether he, also, would be able to suffer such pain for the sake of Christ. He immediately placed his hand on the fire in the coal pan, and firmly held it there till one of his companions drew it away. Hus then said, "Why dost thou fear so small a matter? I only wished to test whether I should have sufficient courage to bear but a small part of that pain which St. Lawrence endured."

Entrance to University of Prague

Hus as Rector of the University

He took the theological course. Its studies he pursued with energy and perseverance. Possessed of considerable ability, he made rapid progress. The plan of studies was that usually followed by students of theology at medieval universities. In connection with these, great importance was attached at the University of Prague to theological disputations, in which subtlety of scholastic distinction and definition found full play. Hus seems to have shown great aptitude for these exercises, and this, no doubt, accounts for the skill and acuteness which he afterwards displayed at Constance, when confronted with the most learned theologians of Europe. His great talents as a speaker were speedily recognized, and he was accounted even more acute than eloquent. At an unusually early age, he took the first of academic honours, that of bachelor of arts, and in due order other degrees such as the university bestowed.

Early Interest in Great Questions. During his residence at the university as a student, the attention of Hus was first drawn to the subjects which later so earnestly claimed his interest, and for which he was to lay down his life. A struggle, more or less distinct, was going on at the university between the more pronounced Romish tendencies and the more liberal views of the Bohemians. Early in his course, the sympathies of Hus were drawn to the side of his countrymen, especially as his teachers belonged to the more liberal party. Moreover, by his residence at the imperial capital, Prague, and his connection with the university, he had large opportunity for observation of what was going on in Bohemia and neighbouring lands in those stirring times. He was at one of the places where the great interests of European Christendom were focussed. He was brought to understand the real condition and sad degeneracy of

the Church. Dire confusion was reigning in the Romish body. For more than twenty years, the Church had been rent by the disgraceful schism. Two popes, each claiming to be the rightful representative of Christ on earth, were denouncing each other in no measured terms. As a result the Church was enfeebled and diseased in all its members. Even in Bohemia and within the walls of Prague there was more than enough to bring thoughtful minds to grave reflection. Hus was greatly afflicted by what he saw around him. In common with other earnest young men, he began to brood over the wrongs of his country. Impressed by the searching and powerful words of Milic and Janov, they were led to devote themselves to the purpose of a higher Christian life. Their active minds were stirred to make a clear understanding of the Scriptures the great purpose of their lives. In the writings of various devout men they saw signs of hope. Particularly, in the works of Wyclif, which at this time were brought to the attention of the university, did they recognize a man whose daring views and Scriptural method of reform were to confirm powerfully their own bent of mind.

Amid such excitements, the university course of young Hus was passed. His mind was too active and his heart too much concerned for the honour of Christ's kingdom to remain insensible. It cost him a severe inward struggle to ally himself with a movement which he could foresee would require the sacrifice of comfort, fame, worldly ambition and commit him to a course of activity which would bring upon him the reproach that Milic and Janov had shared. But at a very early period in life his decision was taken. And he never faltered in his purpose. The circumstances in which he was placed and the objects towards which his attention was necessarily directed added strength to his convictions and firmness to his resolve.

Hus a Professor at the University. Two years after Hus had received his Master's degree, he was called to a professorship in the university. His earliest lectures were philosophical. His theological views took shape slowly. They received their tendency from the continued study of the Scriptures, of the works of the church fathers and of the writings of Janov and Wyclif. The works of the latter, after he had overcome his prejudice against them, attracted him by their reformatory spirit and the supreme authority which they ascribed to the Bible. Hus searched for truth, and the truth as he found it in the Bible was the foundation on which he built. So long as he saw no difference between the teachings of the Scriptures and the doctrines of the Church, he did not antagonize the latter. Whenever any disagreement was plain, he followed the Scriptures. He was willing to give up any opinion he held whenever he met with a sounder. His abilities and personal force were soon recognized by the Bohemian doctors at the university. A distinguished circle gathered around him. They met often. They were drawn together by their common zeal in the search for truth and by a strong national feeling. Moreover, Hus rose quickly in general estimation. In a short time, offices and dignities were bestowed upon him. In 1401, he was made dean of the philosophical faculty and in the following year he was elected rector of the university.

In other directions, the career of Hus was opening with bright promise. His talents as a preacher were early recognized by his countrymen. In 1401 we find him preaching in one of the prominent churches of Prague. By reason of his zeal and eloquence and his purity of life, he was selected to occupy one of the most important posts in the kingdom. He was made Father Confessor to Queen Sophia, wife of King Venceslas of Bohemia. She

was a woman of strong mind and fine character. Through her influence, Hus was received with favour at the court where he gained powerful friends.

Hus and the Bethlehem Chapel. Through one of these, John of Millheim, a favourite courtier of King Venceslas, Hus obtained the appointment of preacher at the Bethlehem Chapel. The erection and endowment of this edifice may be traced to the zeal for more popular religious instruction which had been enkindled by the labours of Waldhauser, Milic and Janov. John of Millheim and a tradesman by the name of Kriz, a rich and patriotic citizen of Prague, established the Chapel. Their intention, as expressed in the deed of foundation, was to provide a house of worship suited for the preaching of the word of God in the language of the people. Such a place did not then exist in the city. In all the other churches of Prague, the immense encumbrance of Romish rites and ceremonies left no sufficient opportunity for preaching the Gospel. It was required of the preacher of the Bethlehem Chapel that he reside in the city and that he preach in the Bohemian tongue twice a day on all Sundays and feast days. This place of worship was called the Bethlehem Chapel, because, in the language of the deed of gift, the common people and Christian believers were to be "refreshed by the bread of holy preaching." The structure appears to have been a somewhat extensive building, deserving rather the name of church than that of chapel, which it always retained. It is said to have been roomy enough to seat over a thousand people, some authorities say three thousand. It fronted on a square that is still known as the Bethlehem Square. The Chapel was entirely demolished in 1786, but various ancient views of it have been preserved. Near the Chapel, the founders built a modest dwelling for the preacher. The door

Bethlehem Square, Site of Bethlehem Chapel

House containing ancient Doorway of Hus's Residence

of this house, hallowed to Bohemians by the fact that it was inhabited for a time by Hus, has been preserved and is now indicated by an appropriate inscription.

Hus entered upon the duties of his office with zeal. The pulpit of the Bethlehem Chapel became for him a throne of power. For twelve years he wielded from it an influence exceeding that of archbishop or king. The former preachers had been renowned for their eloquence. The fame of the Chapel became even greater when Hus began to preach there. Crowds thronged to hear him. They represented every class of society. All hung upon his words. Whatever enmity he encountered, he maintained his influence unimpaired in the pulpit. The whole city was moved. At no time in these last centuries has the power of the pulpit been more strikingly exhibited. Luther found a powerful ally in the press. But as the art of printing with movable types was not invented until after his lifetime, Hus was dependent almost entirely on the pulpit and on his correspondence. In the employment of these means he stood forth without a rival in the kingdom.

Wide Influence of Hus. His ministry had wide significance and influence. The whole city was seething with new intellectual life, with the fierce determination of the Czechs to throw off all foreign bondage, with a quickened interest in religion. Over all phases of this he exercised controlling and directing sway. A learned man himself, he sought constantly to fight ignorance, the fruitful mother of sin and error, and he endeavoured always to inculcate heavenly wisdom. His sermons were very instructive. They commonly consisted of expositions of the appointed gospel or epistle lessons for the day, interwoven with practical applications and passages from the writings of the great teachers of the early Church,

or they treated of doctrinal points or brought out some subject relating to the history of the times. Into the national movement he flung himself with passionate earnestness. Patriotic sentiment he tried to lead to practical effort. The religious interest he sought always to intensify by wakening conscience and bringing individual souls to a saving knowledge of the truth. With honest zeal he set forth the divine commands and counsels. His opportunities drove him to search the Scriptures, not in order to enrich scholastic theology, but to find the words of eternal life. He found that truth which renewed and sanctified his own heart. He was carried forward by it directly in the way of a reformation. His sermons were upon such stirring texts as these, "Ye are the salt of the earth;" "Let us cast off the works of darkness;" "Quench not the spirit;" "Go out and compel them to come in."

On the basis of such themes, he did not hesitate to rebuke the excesses and vices of every class faithfully and sternly. He began by attacking the misdeeds of the idle rich. When a person of noble birth complained to the king, he told the Archbishop of Prague that he must warn Hus to be more cautious in his language. "No, your majesty," replied the archbishop, "Hus is bound by his ordination oath to speak the truth without respect of persons." Later Hus went on to attack the vices of the clergy. Then the archbishop complained to the king, saying that the language of Hus was too rash and would do more harm than good. "No," said the king, "Hus is bound by his ordination oath to speak the truth without respect of persons." Thus for some time Hus was permitted to go on telling people plainly about the blots on their lives. His preaching fanned the desire for reform.

As the pure Bohemian which gushed from his lips and

his clear, simple style made his preaching attractive, his blameless life gave it double force. Men saw in him the devoted minister of Christ who practiced himself what he preached to others. As a pastor he was distinguished by his self-denying faithfulness. It is said of him, "He was untiring in confessional, unwearied in his efforts to convert sinners, assiduous in bringing comfort to the afflicted. He sacrificed everything, he sacrificed himself to save souls." His own favourite saying was borrowed from St. Ambrose, "Prayers and tears are the weapons of a priest."

Hus and Church-Song. In close connection with the ministry of Hus at the Bethlehem Chapel were his endeavours to provide for the orderly participation of laymen in the services, particularly, in church-song. This had gradually become an exclusive privilege of the clergy. In consequence of their ever increasing claim to superiority over laymen, the ancient custom that the congregation should join in the singing had been abandoned. This had been resented by the Bohemians who have fine taste for music. They felt the more keenly about it, as the singers—monks and others of the minor clergy—showed want of reverence, sang mechanically or even falsely and dispatched their duties as singers with indecent haste. Hus blames this abuse in quaint words, "Such a (singer) grinds his words without using his lips or teeth, and they seem as the sound of a millstone which thunders out, 'tr, tr, tr!'" Quite naturally, therefore, the Bohemian reformers and Hus, in particular, became interested in this matter. "The total reform of the Bohemian Church—the cause for which Hus lived and died—was to include a reform in church-song," as Count Lützow writes.

Hus endeavoured to remedy abuses and introduce in the Bethlehem Chapel "quiet song and prayer that

should be pleasing both to the learned and to the simple." In his writings he frequently expounded his views with regard to singing in the church. He declares song to be one of the forms of devotion that constitute the services of the heavenly temple in our home (heaven). In another passage, he exhorts the mournful to expel the plague of sorrow from their hearts by the sweetness of song. As he attached great importance to devotional music, it is not surprising that the Bethlehem Chapel became famed for its singing. The preaching continued mainly to attract the people, as is natural, when we consider the unrivalled eloquence of Hus. Yet the singing by the congregation became a very important feature. Hus well understood the disposition of the crowds that listened to his sermons, and he helped them to give vent to their feelings in the manner most natural to an emotional multitude, that is to say, by means of song.

It was not an easy task to replace the Latin liturgic singing in his Chapel by songs in the national language. With the exception of a very few hymns, there then existed only secular songs in the Bohemian tongue, and these were generally frivolous or of even worse character. Like some later reformers, Hus tried to expel the objectionable songs that were popular and replace them by others of a devout nature. He translated into Bohemian some of the Latin hymns the people had been hearing. Through his influence others were composed or adapted from the Latin by writers now unknown. He composed some hymns himself. Of the many attributed to him, probably, at least, six are his genuine works. Among them are those beginning "Jesus Christ, bountiful Lord," "O, living bread of angels," "To avert from men God's wrath." To encourage singing in the native language, Hus appears to have established a kind of "school," where the people were taught the new devotional songs.

Hus's love of singing did not forsake him to the last. It was while singing a hymn that he ended his life in the flames.

Hus Appointed Preacher to the Synod. His success in the pulpit opened other opportunities to John Hus, which carried him gradually forward in the work of reformation. A year after he had begun his work at the Bethlehem Chapel, the attention of the newly appointed archbishop of Prague, Zbynek, was attracted to Hus, by reason of his exemplary life and eloquence. Zbynek was a man of good intentions, though of little learning. Honestly striving to improve the moral conduct of the clergy, he instituted frequent meetings or synods, at which all matters of discipline could be discussed. He appointed Hus preacher to the synod and commissioned him to report any abuses that fell under his notice. The synodical sermons of Hus differ from his popular discourses. They were delivered in Latin, they showed the scholar and the theologian and sparkled with keen satire. They displayed great moral heroism, for Hus mercilessly set forth and unsparingly condemned the sins of the clergy.

Hus Exposes a Religious Fraud. Two years later the archbishop entrusted Hus and two other priests with a mission of considerable importance. At Wilsnack, a small town of Slavic origin in the now Prussian Province of Brandenburg, three communion wafers had been found, amid the ruins of an old church, impregnated with what appeared to be blood. Priests spread the report that it was the blood of Christ and that miraculous results could be obtained by all who paid homage to the wafers. Countless pilgrims from all countries—Bohemia included—flocked to the spot. Miracles were reported. One

Peter, a robber and murderer, while bound by his fetters in prison, had made a vow to the Holy Blood of Wilsnack. Instantly his fetters were broken and he escaped. Such and similar tales were circulated all over Europe. Hus and his colleagues questioned carefully those at Prague who had visited the new place of pilgrimage. The evidence they collected is curious as bearing witness to the superstition of the times and the dishonesty of the clergy. One of the tales was that a citizen of Prague, Peter of Ash, one of whose hands was maimed, had undertaken a pilgrimage to Wilsnack, and had dedicated a silver hand to the Holy Blood in grateful recognition of his restoration. The evidence showed that Peter had failed to find relief. Furthermore, he had remained three days at Wilsnack to hear what the priests would say about it. In that interval he had seen a priest show a silver hand from the pulpit, saying, "Listen, children, to this miracle. The hand of our neighbour from Prague has been healed by the Holy Blood, and he has offered this silver hand as a thank-offering." At this Peter had risen, shown his maimed hand and cried out, "Priest, thou liest; here is my maimed hand as it always was." The result of the investigation, which exposed like frauds, was that the pilgrimages to Wilsnack were forbidden.

Hus Involved in a Theological Controversy. In the meantime, Hus had, also, been dragged into theological controversy. This came about in the same year in which he was appointed synodical preacher. At that time the writings of Wyclif had been brought to the special attention of the university. They had been extensively circulated and read in Prague. A number of articles extracted from them had recently been condemned by a synod held in London. The masters of the University of Prague could not, therefore, be indifferent to

them. Accordingly, forty-five articles, drawn from the writings of the English reformer, were presented for examination to a general meeting of the university. A stormy debate followed. Hus was present. He was not prepared to defend the articles, for, by his own account, there were certain portions of them which he could not accept. Nor was he prepared to join in the indiscriminate condemnation of the propositions. But when the fact was brought out that the articles attributed statements to Wyclif which he had never made, Hus exclaimed that the falsifiers should be executed, as were those who had recently adulterated foodstuffs in Prague. In spite of protests, the articles were condemned and the members of the university forbidden to teach them. Some years later, at a meeting of the members of the university of the Bohemian nation, this judgment was modified, on the proposal of Hus, in the decision, "that no master or scholar of the Bohemian nation should defend the articles in any false, erroneous or heretical sense."

The very condemnation of Wyclif's writings caused Hus to continue to read and study them. As, at the same time, conditions in Church and state drove him to acquire further knowledge of the truth and as he became convinced of the Biblical character of many of the views of Wyclif, he read with increasing sympathy and enthusiasm. He was fast losing his early horror of what was called heresy in Wyclif. The change going on in his mind was like the experience of Luther, when he found in a library at Erfurt a volume of Hus's sermons. "I was seized with a curiosity to know what doctrines this great heretic had taught. The reading filled me with incredible surprise. I could not comprehend why they should have burned a man who explained Scripture with so much discernment and wisdom. But the very name

of Hus was such an abomination that I imagined that the heavens would be darkened and the sun would fall at the mere mention of it. So I shut the book with a sad heart, consoling myself with the possibility that it was written before he fell into heresy." Similar to this was the experience of Hus with regard to Wyclif. His own convictions became clearer on the subjects of which the English reformer had treated. He recognized the anti-Scriptural usages of the corrupt church in their real character. His estrangement from that church was a gradual one, brought about by his own experiences, as well as his study of various books, Wyclif's among others.

Hus Continues Efforts at Reform. While he studied and reflected, Hus followed up the efforts already put forth to purify the doctrine and life of the Church. He felt that his position justly pointed him out as the champion of the nation's rights and the reformer of abuses in the Church. At the university he devoted special attention to expository lectures and filled the minds of the students and, through them the popular mind, with such a love of the Scriptures as had not been known in the country before. In the Bethlehem Chapel he discussed the essential doctrines of the Christian faith, showing the differences between their Scriptural form and that in which they were ordinarily presented. He pointed out the evils to which their misinterpretation led and, with the authority of a prophet, he called the people to repentance and faith. In his synodical sermons he laid bare the moral sores of the clergy to the very bone. He gave to every sin its right name and burst out upon it in a torrent of burning and indignant eloquence, sounding an alarm that startled the hardest heart. Thus the work went bravely on. New ideas sprang into life. The true light began to shine.

Early Literary Work of Hus. Partly by reason of the theological strife in which he was involved, partly from a desire to make his countrymen familiar with the sacred documents which form the basis of Christianity, Hus was led to seize the pen. Very early Bohemian writings of Hus are some sermons that have recently been discovered. An examination of them shows that, at this time, when his orthodoxy was not yet questioned, he really held the views with reference to the Church and Christian life, which were later charged as heretical. In one of his synodical sermons he distinctly teaches that Christ, not Peter, is the rock on which the Church is built. A very early Bohemian work of Hus was his translation of the *Trialogus* of Wyclif. This was one of the English reformer's most important works and presents what may be regarded as his doctrinal system. This translation has long been lost; its existence is known only through the testimony of many writers of that period. Numerous manuscript copies seem to have circulated largely among the Bohemian nobility. One of the largest and most important of Hus's Latin works is his *Super IV Sententiarum*, a commentary on the sentences of Peter Lombard. This then world-famed book—written in the eleventh century—was for many generations the recognized text-book of theology. It consisted of a vast collection of the opinions of the fathers of the Church on all matters of faith. Judged by his extensive commentary on this work, Hus was a true scholar, a man of great learning. Other Latin works of Hus belonging to this period are controversial treatises.

Results of the Early Work of Hus. These years of the life of Hus have been quite properly termed the "academic period." This ends with the year 1408. During this time, he was mainly occupied with his uni-

versity studies and lectures and his ministry at the Bethlehem Chapel. As yet no suspicion of heresy attached to him. His fearless preaching and scathing rebukes of the vicious clergy had provoked hostility, it is true. They had even subjected him to accusation. But the accusations were based rather on questions of conduct than of doctrine. It was stated that he had extinguished charity by his outspokenness, that he had made the clergy odious to the people. The blameworthy priests could hardly call a man a heretic for telling them plainly about the blots on their lives. Apart from these accusations, Hus was still in agreement with the authorities of the Church and enjoyed comparative quiet, such as was never again to be his lot. The ideas he had come to hold, the activities he had begun and the forces he had set in motion foreshadowed stormy days, if he persisted in his course. Had he halted here, he might have been allowed to live and die in peace and in great esteem. The age was just the one for a clever, adroit man to achieve success. It was an age of temporizing—an age when necessary capital for any profession, secular or religious, was, in the opinion of most, an easy conscience. Hus was not blind to this. Inviting avenues of ambition opened to him. He saw tempting prizes within his grasp. To forego them, to scorn them, to stand by conviction, to invite persecution was no easy task. Yet this task he achieved in a strength that had a higher than any human source.

III

THE PERIOD OF STRIFE: HUS AND THE ARCHBISHOP

Wider Influence of the Work of Hus. The relations between Hus and the Roman Catholic Church had become strained. At every step he had met with enemies. The clergy of rank, the foreign professors at the university and the monks formed a solid phalanx against him. At the instance of offended priests he had, a year before the events about to be narrated, been deprived of his office as preacher to the synod. As he resolutely maintained his ground, open conflict with the authorities of the Church could not long be deferred. Indeed, this was hastened by conditions that became acute and events that were precipitated, with which, in one way or another, he became involved. Henceforth, he appears an open enemy of Rome, though he continued to the end of his life to consider himself a true and faithful member of the Church of Christ. As his activities became more distinctly anti-Roman, it is noteworthy, too, that they assumed larger proportions. The political and religious affairs of Bohemia, at this time, were greatly affected by European conditions. Consequently, the history of the life of Hus widens out and becomes more closely connected with the vast stage of European political and religious movements—a stage on which Hus, for a short time, appears as a prominent figure.

Evils of the Time. The political and religious situation in Europe was dominated, directly or indirectly, by

the schism in the papacy. This period when two, and for a while three, popes claimed to be the successors of St. Peter, is one of the darkest in the history of the Church and of Europe. Violence and anarchy prevailed widely. And nearly all mischiefs, political or religious, were credited to the schism. The Church divided and corrupt, far from being able to restrain grasping princes and parties, only complicated existing strifes, feuds and plots. Everywhere there were turbulence, crime, lawlessness. Nor was this all. Profligacy and corruption tainted the leaders of the Church. Deeds of darkness disgraced the highest dignitaries in it. Church positions were bartered and sold. Priestly avarice was quite unblushing. Verbal warfare between the rival popes was waged in a coarse and abusive manner. The power of excommunication was misused by the popes for crushing political enemies. The faithful were heavily taxed to support the armed forces needed by the popes against their enemies. It is not surprising, therefore, that writers of the time, some of whom had been papal officials, speak with the utmost scorn of the Roman Church. Nor is it surprising that the demand became almost universal that some limit should be set to these abuses. It was but natural that pious and unworldly men, when contrasting the events of their time with their own ideals, should feel an intense longing for the true Church of Christ as they conceived of it.

Failure of Efforts to Correct Abuses. Successive efforts were made to remedy the evil. One or the other of the popes was urged to lay down his office. But this was of no avail. The possession of power had begotten the love of it. The fingers, that had grasped the sceptre as flesh, had turned to iron and would not relax their hold. Hope was entertained that on the death of one of

the rivals, his cardinals would refuse to elect a successor and join themselves to the conclave of the other. Yet this hope was steadily disappointed. On the death of either the French or the Italian pope, the respective cardinals immediately filled the vacancy. Each pope and his body of cardinals had considerable following. Some kingdoms and their rulers held with the French and some with the Italian pope. All kinds of considerations played into the unholy strife. They left confusion worse confounded. When these and like efforts and hopes had come to nought, the idea of summoning a general council of the Church was broached. It was received with general approval. In the event, two general councils, that of Pisa, in 1409, and that of Constance, 1414–1418, had to be held before the schism was finally healed. With both these great church assemblages, called to reform abuses, the life-course and fate of Hus were intimately associated.

The Council of Pisa and Strife in the University. As elsewhere so in Bohemia, the Council of Pisa excited lively interest. When the cardinals assembled there to choose a new pope, they first declared the rival popes deposed. Then they sent a petition to all the Christian princes, to King Venceslas of Bohemia among the rest, begging them to maintain neutrality, that is to say, to recognize thenceforth neither of the two rival popes, Gregory and Benedict. King Venceslas was inclined to view such a proposal favourably. As the opinion of the University of Prague was considered to be of great importance in all theological and religious discussions, it was customary to consult it on such matters. Accordingly, the king turned to the university for approval of his policy of neutrality over against the council. But at the university opinion was divided. The Bohemian fac-

ulty and students sided with the king, the other nations were not disposed to comply with his wishes. They were supporters of Pope Gregory. Strangely enough, they were able to set aside the judgment of the Bohemians by the method of voting in vogue at the institution. Almost from its beginning the university had been divided into "nations," as was then customary at the University of Paris and elsewhere. The Bohemian nation included, besides the students from Bohemia, those who belonged to Moravia, Hungary and other southern Slavonic countries. The Bavarian nation comprised the students from Bavaria, Austria, Suabia, Franconia and the Rhine lands. The students from Saxony, Meissen, Thuringia, Sweden and Denmark formed the Saxon nation. The Polish nation was composed of Poles, Russians, Lithuanians and Silesians. This division into nations extended, also, to the masters. It had frequently provoked dissensions. In voting upon all important matters that came before the university, the votes were taken by nations. Each nation had one vote. When, therefore, the foreign nations voted together, the Bohemians were powerless. So it was in this case. The three nations voted solid against the proposal of the king, inspired to do so by a mixture of political and religious motives.

The indignant Bohemians were driven by this act to the last limit of endurance. They were tired out by the persistent opposition of the foreign nations to reform. And this last vote, by which the wishes of Bohemia and the free tendencies of the people on a matter of such vital importance were stifled at their own university, determined them to decisive action. They represented to the king, by deputation as well as by the help of friendly nobles, that the Bohemians should have, at least, equal rights in the control of the university. After some delay

the king yielded to their request and, early in 1409, issued a decree stating that, whereas he considered it unjust that foreigners should so largely enjoy advantages that belonged rightly to residents, henceforth the Bohemian nation shall have in all assemblies, judgments, examinations, elections and other transactions three votes. This decree, which altered the entire constitution of the university, was received with enthusiasm by the national party. Hus, the principal leader of that party, was at the moment seriously ill. Two friends brought the cheering news into the sick-chamber, where Hus received it with warmest gratitude and joy. People credited him with bringing about the welcome change. He became more popular than ever. The victory lifted him to greater prominence as the leader of his people.

His triumph, also, made his position more difficult and hazardous. The foreign elements would not accommodate themselves to the provisions of the decree. At first they were stunned. Then they remonstrated. They bound themselves by solemn oaths to leave the university rather than admit that the Bohemians should have three votes at the deliberations of the university and the other nations only one. When they found that the king held to his decision, they were exasperated beyond measure and proceeded to carry out their rash threats. Some of them burned down the theological college, and a few days afterwards German students, masters and doctors, to the number of several thousand, left the city. Most of them journeyed to Leipsic and founded a university there. Whithersoever they went, they carried with them reports injurious to the reform party in Bohemia and to its leader. These contributed, some years later, to the intensely bitter feeling manifest against Hus at the Council of Constance. In Prague, too, considerable ill-will was excited against Hus by this occurrence. The exodus

of so large a number of scholars and students meant great loss from a business point of view. Hus and his friends were regarded by the worldly minded as the destroyers of their prosperity. In spite of this, however, he was very generally treated with deserved honor by his countrymen. Rising from his sick-bed, he was elected rector of the university, an office he had already held some years previously. This placed him at the height of his political position.

Failure of Reform at Pisa Intensifies Strife. In other ways the Council of Pisa, by what it did and by what it did not do, exerted determinative influence on the life-work and fate of Hus. Indirectly, it is true, but none the less really. The debates of that council were stormy and largely resultless. It did deprive both popes, Gregory and Benedict, of the papal rank and all other dignities. A new pope was elected, who assumed the name of Alexander V. But in the matter of church-reform nothing was done beyond a few unimportant regulations. That great subject was referred to a more convenient season—a future council. Abuses were not corrected. Indeed, they were aggravated. Not all Christendom was satisfied with the election of Alexander V. Despite deposition, Gregory and Benedict were still in the field, each supported by a powerful following. There were now three claimants of the popedom. Thus the irony of events showed that thorough and entire reform, the only remedy for the deep-seated malady of Christendom, had not been achieved by the council. With fine insight, one writer of the time, a former rector of the University of Paris, says of the Council of Pisa, "The assembly of Pisa only deceived the Church of God. It cried *Peace, Peace*, when there was no peace. These carnal and avaricious men have obstructed the

reformation of the Church. . . . They, first of all, proceeded to a new election. When this was done and they had obtained the promotions they had asked, they cried Peace and Union." Another pious and able writer of those days characterizes the council as "a profane, heretical, cursed, seditious, absurd, scandalous, diabolical assembly!" Such a council effected no improvement; it only opened an unlimited field for bitter controversy. Many earnest and noble men were involved in the struggles that ensued. A man of the prominence and power of Hus, equipped with as firm convictions as he was, could not keep out of the fray. His bold utterances and equally courageous, diversified activity excited widespread hostility. From this time on, the influences which brought Hus at last to a martyr's pains and glory were unceasingly at work.

Pope John XXIII. Moreover, the council brought into the foreground a personage destined to enter not a little into the life of Hus. This was Baldasarre Cossa. He was the leading spirit of the council. Through his influence, Alexander V had been elected. The latter was a pious, learned, aged man, but completely under the control of Cossa. When Alexander V died, Cossa assumed openly the authority which he had practically already wielded. He had himself elected pope, as one writer puts it "unfortunately for himself and many others." He was crowned pope under the name of John XXIII. We meet with him in some of the most important moments in the life of Hus. It was this pope who summoned Hus to Rome. It was his attempt to raise funds in Bohemia for the continuation of his war against Naples that caused the troubles in Prague which forced Hus to exile himself. It was he who appeared as Hus's principal antagonist during the earlier part of his stay at

Constance. It was he through whose influence Hus was imprisoned shortly after his arrival at Constance. A brief glance at his life and character will, therefore, be interesting. Early in life he had been a soldier. He is said, for a time, to have been a pirate. He was, undoubtedly, a man of exceptional talent and reckless determination. But he cultivated an absolute contempt for the distinction of good and evil. Finding a military career not satisfying for his ambitions, he took to study and distinguished himself in scholarly attainment by reason of his brilliant talents. Entering the service of various high officers in the Church, he rose from one post of honour and power to another, though his life was very evil. He is known as one of the most infamous characters that blacken the pages of history. He was given to almost every form of vice. The historian Gibbon calls him "the most profligate of mankind." It is shocking to think that such a man, whose vile character was no secret, should have been able by shrewdness, audacity and treachery to work himself to the position of sovereign head of the Romish Church. Yet such was the fact. His last step to that dignity was marked by crime. For he is charged, on good ground of having poisoned his predecessor to make room for himself. In his own person he typified the evils and disease of the times.

Causes of the Conflict of Hus with the Archbishop. With this notorious character Hus did not, however, come into contact immediately. He was brought to oppose him largely through previous dispute with the ecclesiastical authorities at Prague. At the critical moment when Hus triumphed at the university, he was about to come into direct conflict with Archbishop Zbynek, who had been his friend. For some time, the position of Hus with respect to the church authorities at

Prague had been undefined. It had become constantly more difficult. Through his studies and many-sided work, he had been brought to clearer doctrinal conviction, an evangelical position quite at variance with the teachings of Romanism. And by clearer understanding of the corruption of the Church and the causes thereof, he had been led to more vehement and outspoken denunciation of abuses. Hence, there came fresh attacks on the part of the parish priests. They were bent on his ruin. They drew up a long list of accusations. To obtain these they had spied upon Hus and distorted his statements. Among the numerous hearers at the Bethlehem Chapel there had been some undesirable visitors, parish priests come to gather material for accusation. This had been brought to the notice of Hus. Soon after he had preached on the difference between the law of God and the command of men. He had exclaimed, "What is corn but the law of God, what chaff but the command of men!" Leaning over the pulpit, he had then addressed a spying priest, "Note that down, cowled monk, and carry it to the other side." It would be wearisome to recount the accusations the priests had thus secured. In brief, they charged Hus with opposing various time-honoured customs and traditions of the Church. And they raised the cry of heresy against him, because he had boldly defended some of the doctrines of Wyclif which appeared to him to be sustained by the Scriptures. The charge of heresy was in those days considered a terrible accusation. Even in our own times it is not lightly taken. But then it was the worst charge that could be levelled against a man. For a heretic was regarded as an offender against the most cherished possession of people, namely, their faith. That is why Hus, to the last, hotly denied that he was chargeable with heresy.

Making use of the accusations against Hus, Zbynek,

who was still a supporter of Pope Gregory, imposed silence on all who denied the claims of that pope and forbade their exercising priestly functions. Hus knew that this was aimed at him and his work at the Bethlehem Chapel, for he had been a supporter of the council. Hus paid no attention to the archbishop's decree. He kept on preaching. He could do so without being molested, because he had powerful friends at court and at the university. Among the nobles, too, he numbered some staunch supporters. The archbishop found himself powerless. This did not improve his feeling towards Hus. His spirits were further ruffled when various popular demonstrations, such as the singing of mocking songs, showed him how much he was disliked in the city. Then Zbynek saw where his interest as archbishop and persecutor of Hus lay. He changed the whole course of affairs by going over to the pope elected by the council, Alexander V. This did not diminish his unpopularity, but it gave him great advantage over Hus. He did not hesitate to use it. He proved himself a good hater. He was spurred on by those who wished to make him their instrument of revenge on Hus. A former friend of Hus wrote to the archbishop, earnestly beseeching him to be on his guard, lest by the multiplication of errors the flock should drink in that infidel poison which would destroy their souls. Zbynek sent an embassy to the pope, stating that all Bohemia and Moravia and neighbouring states had been corrupted by the heretical articles of Wyclif and suggesting that in these countries preaching should be forbidden everywhere, except in the cathedral, collegiate and parish churches and in those belonging to the monasteries. This proposal aimed principally at Hus's Bethlehem Chapel. The archbishop easily procured from the pope a bull condemning the heresies and giving him full power to proceed against heretics, as well as to forbid preaching

outside of the appointed churches. Hus unhesitatingly refused to obey the prohibition. He asked:

"Where is there any authority of Holy Writ or where are there any rational grounds for forbidding preaching in so public a place, fitted up for that very purpose in the midst of the great city of Prague? Nothing else can be at the bottom of this but the jealousy of Antichrist."

And he further wrote such noble words as these, "I avow it to be my purpose to defend the truth which God has enabled me to know, and especially the truth of Holy Scripture, even to death, since I know that the truth stands and is forever mighty and abides. And if the fear of death should terrify me, still I hope in my God and in the assistance of the Holy Spirit, that the Lord Himself will give me firmness. And if I have found favour in His sight, He will crown me with martyrdom. But what more glorious triumph is there than this? Inviting His faithful ones to this victory, our Lord says, 'Fear not them that kill the body.'"

These were not words of vainglorious boasting. Hus weighed carefully the question of duty. He made his decision in full view of the consequences it might involve. While he was enthusiastic in his devotion to truth and firm in his purpose, he was yet calm and self-possessed. The zeal of his earlier years had been chastened by fuller knowledge and larger experience. But the martyr spirit still glowed within him. He resolved on an appeal to the pope. He did this deliberately and publicly. His great congregations at the Bethlehem Chapel were responding with lively demonstration to the vigorous declarations from his pulpit. There he announced his intention to appeal to the pope. He asked whether they would join him in the appeal. The whole multitude cried out, "Yes, we will, we will!" His appeal, in a dozen clearly stated articles, reviewed the ground on which he

justified his course. It indicated that he had calmly surveyed his position and was prepared to maintain it.

Burning of Heretical Books by the Archbishop. Meantime, the archbishop was pressing measures with characteristic vigour. For some time, he had intended that all heretical writings, particularly those of Wyclif, should be brought to his palace and there burned. This, on the advice of his counsellors and in accordance with instructions from Rome, in order that they might be removed "from the sight of the faithful." But his purpose had been stayed by the protest of the masters and students of the university and by the intervention of the king. Hus had, indeed, brought the writings to the archbishop, asking that the errors in them might be pointed out on the basis of the Scriptures. He could not yield till convinced by argument. But argument was not the archbishop's forte. He was prepared not to argue but to use Rome's logic, fire. Now, emboldened by the papal bull, he took extreme measures. He ordered all heretical writings of every sort to be brought to him. In the absence of the king from the city, he assembled the principal church authorities and priests in the court of the palace. This was barricaded and guarded by a considerable armed force, to prevent any interference. A stake was erected in the middle of the court. Some two hundred volumes, many of them beautifully engrossed and splendidly bound, were placed around it. The archbishop himself lighted the pile. The bells were tolled from the tower of the city, as though for a funeral, and all present sang the *Te Deum* while the books were burning.

The deed was done. It was a fateful one—one of which the archbishop assuredly did not see the importance. All hope of a peaceful reformation of the Church in Bohemia

ended here. It was meant to be the end of trouble. By God's providence it proved the beginning of sorrows. A large proportion of the citizens of Prague were enraged. A cry of indignation rose throughout Bohemia. The queen wept. The king stormed and cursed. Some acts of violence were committed by the angry populace. The action proved as vain as it was provoking. Not all of Wyclif's books were burned. Some people had refused to give them up, scorning the argument of fagots and bonfires. And in an amazingly short time, though the art of printing had not yet been invented, a large number of the forbidden books had been recopied. It is not strange that the people were so exasperated at the action of the archbishop. Through the preaching they had been privileged to hear and by means of the books they had read, convictions had taken strong hold upon their minds—convictions that were confirmed by a study of the Bible which was, also, in their hands. In the smoke of the burning books, therefore, they saw not zeal for the faith but only the ignorance and malice of persecutors. In such a state of mind they might easily be excited to deeds of violence. It is a great tribute to the power and influence of Hus that in such a condition of the community, apart from some instances of imprudence, order was generally maintained. He preached with greater power than ever to the crowds that thronged his chapel. He dared not be silent. The power of his sermons over the throngs that pressed to hear him was incalculable. He did not hesitate, it is true, to condemn the conduct of the archbishop. His words thrilled the hearts of his hearers as he exclaimed, "Fire does not consume truth. It is always a mark of a little mind to vent anger on inanimate and uninjurious objects."

Furthermore, he and his adherents held, according to the custom of the time, a great disputation at the uni-

versity. This, in protest against the destruction of the writings and to afford opportunity for dignified defense of the doctrines they contained. Hus, also, issued a treatise, showing the futility and absurdity of such destruction of books that had much good in them—a method that brought only discord into the city. But the Bohemian reformer did nothing rash. He was entangled in no fanatical demonstration. Amid feverish excitement, he stood firm as a rock and his work went on.

Hus Disregards a Summons to Rome. While Prague was thus agitated, the appeal of Hus reached Rome. The reformer had appealed from the archbishop to the pope, as Paul had appealed from Festus to Cæsar. There was as little hope of justice in the one case as in the other. Since Alexander V had died, the appeal came before the infamous Pope John XXIII. It was supported by letters from the king and the queen, from nobles and learned men of Bohemia. To a man like John XXIII, who had no very firm opinions in matters of religion, it must have seemed that people in the north were taking a trifle very seriously. However, he went through the formality of referring the appeal to a commission of cardinals. So important did they consider the case that they invited the theological faculties of the Universities of Bologna, Paris and Oxford to advise with the commission in the proper disposal of the writings. The majority of this conference thought ill of the archbishop's plan of burning the books. Before they could reach any further conclusion, a deputation from Archbishop Zbynek to the pope induced that worthy to take the whole matter out of the hands of the commission and entrust it to a single member of that body, Cardinal Colonna. He sided with the archbishop. He not only approved all that had been done but urged further re-

pressive measures. The appeal of Hus fell to the ground. He was required within a certain time to appear at Rome and defend himself before the pope. The clouds were thickening over Hus.

The position of Hus in consequence of this summons was a difficult one. His friends, king and peasant, nobles and university men, indignantly protested against the injustice of it. It meant a journey of twelve hundred miles. It would be through regions swarming with his personal enemies. His supporters joined in dissuading him from going to Italy. This alone would not have prevented him from doing so. But while he had no fears of a martyr's fate, he was no fanatical aspirant for martyrdom. There were weighty considerations against his obeying the summons. He could not see that any advantage was to be gained by the Bohemian Church and the party of reform by his appearing before John XXIII. He was acquainted with the character of that pope and knew what might be expected from him by a man who had spoken so strongly against the vices of the clergy as Hus had done. He would have to use money others were willing to supply for the journey but which he as a conscientious man felt should go to the poor. He would be obliged for some time to desert his congregation. As a cool and determined Christian, therefore, he decided not to go. He was a genuine Christian confessor who seeks not, but accepts, if it comes, the martyr's crown.

Having reached this decision, he sent representatives, Master John of Jesenice, a doctor of theology, and two younger theologians. But they were not able to accomplish anything in his behalf. When the term fixed for his personal appearance had expired, the decree of excommunication was issued against him. This decree was published in nearly all the parish churches of Prague, in March, 1411.

Letter from an English Wyclifite. Hus paid no attention to the decree and continued preaching. He declared that he would obey God rather than man. He felt no awe of an unrighteous excommunication. While some friends now deserted him, others drew closer to him. At about this time, Hus received a cheering letter from an English Wyclifite. Interesting in itself, it is another proof that events in Bohemia were beginning to attract wide attention in Europe. In this letter of encouragement, the writer, Richard Wyche, gives evidence of surprisingly accurate knowledge of affairs in Bohemia. Hus took it into the pulpit and read it to his congregation. Coming from so distant a country as England, it was received with great enthusiasm by the large number of people assembled. In his reply to Wyche, Hus states that ten thousand must have been present. Many of these evidently were crowded about the doors to catch as much as possible of the preacher's words. The answer of Hus was couched in fervent language. He assured the Church of Christ in England that the king, queen, lords, knights and common people in the cities and throughout the country of Bohemia were holding fast by the true doctrine. One passage in the letter gives an idea of the strength of the movement for church reform in Bohemia. Hus writes, "Know, dearest brother, that our people will hear nothing but Holy Scripture, particularly the evangels and epistles, and whenever in a city or town, cottage or castle, a preacher of holy truth appears, the people flock together, despising the evilly-disposed clergy."

The Interdict. All this was maddening to the archbishop. And he was further irritated when the king ordered that certain estates and houses in Prague belonging to the archbishop should be taken and sold, the re-

ceipts to make good the losses of those who had been deprived of their books. Driven to extremity, the archbishop proclaimed an interdict over the city of Prague and its immediate neighbourhood. The interdict was one of the most powerful and dreaded weapons of the Romish Church. It was a kind of public excommunication of the entire city and its surroundings. While it lasted, no person, other than a priest, beggar or child under twelve could receive Christian burial or be taken to another diocese for burial. There could be no public service in the churches, no church bells could be rung and mass could be said only behind closed doors. Communion could be administered only to the dying, weddings could not be performed. A general appearance of mourning and fasting had to be assumed by the populace.

Defeat of the Archbishop. This terrible weapon brought matters to a crisis. The king now authoritatively interfered. He appointed a commission to which the whole matter was referred. Both parties pledged themselves to submit to its decision. It seems strange, by reason of their determined hostility, that the archbishop and the pope, on their part, should have been willing to do this. The reason is not far to seek. The pope was not just then a free agent, because of political and religious complications. The schism had not yet been healed. Two rival popes were still in the field. John XXIII could not risk offending the King of Bohemia, who was a friend of Hus. Knowing that he would have to work very cautiously at the undoing of the Bohemian reformer, it is not unlikely that the pope advised the archbishop to make his peace with the king. The king and the commission acted with great prudence in the matter. As a result of their deliberation, an agreement was formed, which in less troublous times would have

restored to Bohemia a lasting peace, such as that country greatly needed. Among other provisions of the document, it was stated that the archbishop should withdraw the interdict and that both parties should recall their representatives at the papal court and desist from further lawsuits. Besides, the archbishop was to write a letter to the pope, stating that the differences between himself and Hus had been arranged and that no more errors prevailed in Bohemia.

For some reason, the letter never reached the pope. But this had no influence on the situation. The archbishop soon considered that he had new causes of complaint. He found occasion to administer a feeble reprimand to Hus on account of some of his utterances. He saw that he continued to be unpopular in Prague. His complaints to the king were unheeded. He retired from the city a broken-hearted man. He died a few months later. Zbynek's death was followed by a brief moment of calm. It seemed to be the longed-for peace. But it was only a lull in the storm, which soon burst forth with greater fury than ever.

IV

THE PERIOD OF STRIFE: HUS AND THE POPE

CAUSE of Renewed Strife. For some months peace continued. The storm seemed to have spent its strength. The royal commission had given its decision early in July, 1411, and the archbishop had died in September of the same year. Only one incident, belonging to this brief, undisturbed period, is recorded. Two English envoys, bound for Hungary on a diplomatic mission, stopped in Prague. With one of these, John Stokes, Hus had some discussion about the doctrines of Wyclif. But this interested only the masters and students of the university. Before the year was out, however, events occurred which gave a new aspect and a deeper interest to the struggle in which Hus was engaged. Events in distant Italy brought on a crisis which was more serious than any of the former disturbances in Bohemia. Soon after becoming pope, John XXIII strove, with all his power, to carve out of Italy a territory over which the pope might exercise temporal dominion. Here he found a dangerous antagonist in Ladislas, King of Naples, a wily adventurer not unlike Pope John himself. Ladislas invaded the territory in question and threatened Rome, where Pope John had established his residence. The pope then decided to proclaim a crusade against Ladislas. The name crusade (war of the cross or holy war) had long been misused. Of noble origin, it had often been applied to very unholy and worldly warfare waged by ambitious popes against princes and kings, in order to give an impression

of sanctity. So it was in this case. In December, 1411, the pope published a bull against Ladislas, pronouncing a curse upon him in most awful terms and calling upon all Christendom to join in the crusade against him. This bull was to be read in the churches every Sunday. It granted plenary indulgence (forgiveness of sins) to all who took part in the war or contributed towards the expenses of the campaign. This act of the pope was to kindle anew the smouldering fire of controversy at Prague.

Hus and the Sale of Indulgences. A papal legate arrived in the city, in the spring of 1412. He brought the sacred pallium—a vestment sent by the pope as a token of authority—to Archbishop Albik, the successor of Zbynek. He was, also, to publish the bull of the pope against Ladislas. He suspected that Hus might oppose the measure. Yet it was highly important for the success of the sale of indulgences, the practical plan to raise funds for the crusade, that the great preacher should not do so. Hus was, therefore, brought before the legate.

"Will you obey the apostolical mandates?" asked the legate.

Hus did not hesitate. "I am ready with all my heart to obey the apostolical mandates."

"Do you see?" said the gratified legate to those standing by. "The master is quite ready to obey the apostolical mandates."

"My lord," replied Hus, "understand me well. I said I am ready with all my heart to obey the apostolical mandates. But I call apostolical mandates the doctrines of the apostles of Christ; and so far as the papal mandates agree with these, so far will I obey them most willingly. But if I see anything in them at variance with these, I shall not obey, even though the stake were staring me in the face."

It was plain that Hus was not disposed to pass the

matter over in silence. He would take his full share in a discussion that was to agitate the kingdom. In consequence, we must consider him as occupying a new position, one that was more difficult than any he had occupied before. He was to come into direct conflict with the pope. He was to question papal authority, refute papal logic, expose papal baseness and iniquity. In his past efforts he had not had occasion to oppose the pope personally. He had recognized him as the head of the Church, appealed to him, addressed him in respectful language and shown him due reverence. Such a position was no longer possible. He had entered more deeply into the whole subject of the authority of the pope. As a reformer by nature and by the call of the Holy Spirit, as a public and influential man, he felt impelled to resist the evil tendencies of the priestly rule system wherever they appeared. His soul revolted at the sale of the indulgences. His duty to Christ and the Church required that he should express his abhorrence.

He knew the risk. He knew that he was staking his life on the venture. He knew that some of his friends would desert him. He knew that to arouse the papacy, even though it had lost much of its power, was to rouse a dragon breathing fire and smoke. Moreover, he knew that he could no longer rely on the powerful external aid he had thus far enjoyed. In spite of bitter conflicts and the hatred of the priests, he had thus far been strong in the affections of the people and his cause had received the support of the king. Now conditions had changed. The archbishop and the king were ranged together. Both acknowledged John XXIII as the true pope. In these circumstances, so different from any in which he had previously been placed, his courage was to be put more severely to the test. Should he speak or keep silence? In this emergency that thus arose, Hus did not

falter. He did not tremble to speak his convictions. With him obedience to Christ stood first in importance. The limit of obedience to all authority was to be determined by this rule. The bull required what was directly opposed to the law of Christ. He could not obey the bull. He could not break his rule—to obey God rather than man. This rule puts Hus upon the roll of heroes. It was the rule of the apostles when they were haled before the Sanhedrim at Jerusalem. It was the rule of Socrates when facing the judges of Athens, of Paul before Felix and Agrippa, of Luther at the Diet of Worms.

Doctrine of Indulgences. For an understanding of the conflict in which Hus now engaged, a word is in order concerning the difficult and complicated doctrine of indulgences. This is peculiar to the Roman Church. It was developed in medieval times and sanctioned by the Council of Trent (1563). In Roman legal language, *indulgentia* is a term for remission of punishment. In churchly language, an indulgence means the remission of the temporal (not the eternal) punishment of sin (not of sin itself), on condition of penitence and the payment of money to the Church or to some charitable object. The doctrine in its most plausible form is stated by a Romanist writer thus, "It is a releasing, by the power of the keys committed to the Church, the debt of temporal punishment which may remain due upon account of our sins, after the sins themselves, as to the guilt and eternal punishment, have been already remitted by repentance and confession." The practice of indulgences grew out of the custom of northern and western barbarians to substitute a money fine for punishment of an offense. The Church favoured this custom in civil matters, in order to avoid bloodshed, but it did wrong in applying it to religious offenses.

In further explanation, it may be said that the system of the indulgences was connected with the Romish doctrine of penance. Penance includes contrition of the heart, confession by the mouth and satisfaction by good works, such as prayer, fasting, almsgiving, pilgrimages. God alone forgives the eternal punishment of sin. But the sinner has to bear the temporal punishments, either in this life or in purgatory, and these punishments are under control of the Church or the priesthood. Thus, it appears that the idea fitted in very well with the Romish theory of priestly rule. And however revolting it appears to sound moral feeling, the theory of it is not as dreadful as the practice has sometimes been. In theory, indulgences were to be granted only to the penitent, and they were to cover only the third element of penance, namely, satisfaction by good works. But ignorant and superstitious people did not make these fine distinctions set forth in the Latin statement of the doctrine. In practice, men do not sin in Latin. Pope John's indulgences were regarded as the selling of permission to sin, or the buying of pardon for transgressions. The people looked upon them as covering all the elements of the sacrament of penance. And unscrupulous sellers of indulgences left them under that impression.

Sale of the Indulgences. Such a person was the man Venceslas Tiem, to whom the pope entrusted the sale of indulgences in Bohemia. He arrived in May, 1412. He was utterly unfit for the task. His behaviour—like that of Tetzel, who a century later sold indulgences in the days of Luther—was bound to cause trouble. He took little notice of the restrictions imposed on him by the archbishop and others. The traffic in indulgences he carried on in the manner that would give him the largest profits and enable him to send the largest sums to Italy.

The sale was soon in full swing. Money chests were set up in the Cathedral of St. Vitus, in the Thein Church and in the Church on the Vysehrad, the most important churches in Prague. Other places in the towns and in the country were assigned to middlemen—worthless priests, because worthy men were not suitable for the unholy trade—who had to consign to Tiem a fixed sum, while they were at liberty to obtain as great a profit as they could by the sale of the indulgences. These men bargained shamelessly with faithful but ignorant people.

Hus Opposes the Traffic. It was impossible that this iniquitous procedure should not rouse indignation among worthy and thoughtful citizens of the country. Hus at once entered the lists. He protested from his pulpit and in the lecture room against the sale of the indulgences. He dared to say what he thought of a measure which transgressed the fundamental principles of the Gospel and scandalized all Christian minds. His sermons on the subject were bold and evangelical. In one of them he says, "From all this it appears, dear Christian, that a man can receive the pardon of his sins only through the power of God and by the merits of Christ. Let who will proclaim the contrary, let the pope, or a bishop, or a priest say: 'I forgive thee thy sins, I absolve thee from their penalty, I free thee from the pains of hell'—it is all vain and helps thee nothing. God alone, I repeat, can forgive sins through Christ, and He pardons the penitent only."

He was not content to make vague declarations or preach single sermons on the subject. He wished to set forth a clear, convincing statement of his convictions. He placarded theses on church doors, announcing that he would hold a public disputation on the indulgences in the large hall of the university. Priests, monks and

teachers were challenged to meet him with their objections. The disputation took place on June 17, 1412. It was a grand occasion. An immense throng responded to the announcement. Even the common people crowded in to listen to the arguments of their favourite preacher, and to feast their eyes on the manly bearing of one who, for Christ's sake and their own, dared to question and deny the authority of the pope. The question discussed was, "Whether it was permissible and expedient, according to the law of Christ, to the glory of God, the salvation of Christian people that the bulls of the pope concerning the raising the cross against Ladislas, King of Apulia, and his accomplices be commended to the faithful in Christ." The meeting was somewhat stormy. The address of Hus was a "model of acute and striking argumentation," and proved conclusively that the papal bull ran counter to the Holy Scriptures and was an outrage upon Christianity. It showed that Hus had gone to the root of the matter. He knew his ground, had taken his stand and was prepared for the consequences. The majority of the theologians, however, came to the sage and safe conclusion that it was not their business to inquire into the value of the papal letters. They would receive the bull as obedient sons and not commit themselves to any decision. Palec, a former close friend, after wavering a short time in the dispute over the indulgences, went over to the other camp. The last word Hus said to him was, "Palec is my friend, Truth is my friend: of the two it were only right to honour Truth most." Henceforth, Palec was a bitter enemy of Hus. Other friends, also, became unsparing foes.

Demonstration Against Indulgences. Hus was dissatisfied with the tame and cowardly conclusion of the university men. He felt for the honour of the law of

God, for the cause of his native land, for the souls of his countrymen. He saw in the act of the pope abuse of sacred interests. His spirit glowed with the resolute purpose to unmask the false pretensions and evil principles of the crusade and the indulgences. Yet he spoke and acted quietly as well as firmly. On this, as on other occasions, his moderation appears strikingly as an element of his strength. He avoided everything calculated to excite his hearers. His friends did not always do the same. Their well-meant but heated zeal did much to complicate matters that were already sufficiently difficult for him. Such was the course adopted by Jerome of Prague. An able, brilliant and brave man, he was the stormy petrel of the reform movement. At the disputation he delivered a speech which roused the feelings of the students and others to the highest pitch. In the evening bodies of students escorted him home in triumph. Popular demonstrations followed. In these Hus was not concerned. They must have been very painful to his truly pious mind. A mock procession was got up. A student, disguised as a woman of low character, was placed in a chariot. He had round his neck and arms silver bells which rang continuously. In front of him was placed a large sheet of paper to which were attached leaden seals, giving it the appearance of a papal bull. He was followed by a great crowd of students and townfolk. Many carried sticks and even swords. The procession wound its way through the principal streets, the guards proclaiming, "We are carrying the writings of a heretic to the stake." In the Charles Square the documents imitating the papal bulls were placed under an improvised gallows and burnt amid the applause of the crowd. This foolish freak was intended to mimic the burning of Wyclif's works by the archbishop. It fanned the flame of public excitement to a fiercer heat.

First Martyrs of the Bohemian Reformation. A far more serious affair was that of the Three Martyrs. On the day after the burning of the papal bulls, several young men determined that the ignorance and iniquity of the clergy should be exposed. They resolved to visit the churches generally and contradict every priest who should preach the indulgences. Public opinion was so irritated by the traffic that when these young students and artisans carried out their purpose, parts of the congregations in the larger churches joined in the protest. They told the priests in the midst of their discourses that they lied and that Master Hus had taught them better. Three of the young men, considered to be the leaders, were arrested and brought to the town hall of the city. The magistrates sided with the papal party. They determined to frighten the populace by vigorous action. They condemned the young men to death.

When Hus heard of this, he went to the town hall, at the head of some two thousand masters and students, begging that the lives of the young men might be spared. He said that he did not approve of their course but it was the outgrowth of his teachings and that he alone must bear the blame. As a great concourse of people gathered round the council-house, the magistrates became alarmed. After conferring together, they assured Hus that nothing would be done to the young men. With a word from Hus, the council-house might have been stormed and the prisoners released. But he was opposed to violence. The innate goodness of his own nature and his ready confidence in the goodness of others prompted him to accept the promise of the magistrates. He made known the decision to the people and persuaded them to disperse.

Scarcely had they gone, when a scornful laugh passed around the council table. The councillors ordered the

executioners to lead the young men aside and behead them. The foul deed could not long remain a secret. The people, again, rushed together from every side. The bodies were found. A noble lady spread fine linen over them. Many other women dipped their handkerchiefs in the blood of the martyrs. The bodies were borne in solemn procession to the Bethlehem Chapel, a great train of mourners following. There with the chanting of the hymn, "Isti sunt sancti," and the "mass of martyrs" the dead were buried. Hus appears not to have been present at the funeral. Overwhelmed with grief at the melancholy issue of the affair, he gave himself up to retirement and sorrow. Only after the lapse of some days, when he had somewhat revived from his grief, did he preach a funeral sermon in memory of the young men. Doubtless, his feelings were like those of Luther, when the first two martyrs fell in the time of the Reformation, one hundred and twelve years later. The greatness of Hus appears in this that he continued to maintain his attitude of moderation, even after this judicial murder of the three young men. On the Sunday succeeding the sad affair, Hus preached as usual in the Bethlehem Chapel. He made no allusion to the events of the past week. Ignoble adversaries declared that he had been frightened into silence. His motives were very different. He knew that a large number of soldiers had been gathered in the town to suppress possible disturbances and riots. And while he always cherished feelings of loyalty towards King Venceslas, he, also, knew to what sudden movements of fury he was subject. An order from the king, on the slightest provocation, might have caused a terribly murderous struggle in the streets. One word of Hus from the pulpit would have brought on a desperate conflict. Through his silence such a catastrophe was averted. Many of the Praguers caught the spirit of their leader

and, at this time, behaved themselves with studious moderation. Fine testimony to the influence of Hus as the leader of his people.

Foreign Correspondence of Hus. The influence of Hus as a leader of the people of Bohemia was widely as well as strongly exercised. This is shown by a letter which the reformer wrote in these very stormy days. Shortly after his disputation in the great hall of the university, Hus wrote to the King of Poland. This letter, breathing intense hatred of the whole system of church abuses, is an illustration of how far-reaching was the influence of Hus. His patriotic efforts to increase the power and importance of his country aimed, as far as circumstances permitted, to establish friendly relations with foreign countries. Materials regarding this phase of his activity are scant. But the few documents or notices that have come to light are significant. Reference has already been made to the correspondence of Hus with an English follower of Wyclif. A recent Bohemian writer asserts that Hus wrote, also, to Lord Cobham, begging him to send copies of Wyclif's writings. This intercourse with England was purely theological and led to no political consequences. Hus's relations with the Slavic countries, as Lützow states, had political results, some of which reached into the period after the death of Hus. Thus, the prominent part played by the Poles in the Hussite Wars is foreshadowed in the cordial relations which Hus established with King Vladislav of Poland. Two years before the time of the letter mentioned above, Hus had already written to this monarch. Then, in 1410, King Vladislav had won a decisive victory over the Teutonic Order, which broke its power for all time. The king had sent messengers of victory to sovereigns and, also, to men of prominence in Bohemia. It goes to prove that the

fame of Hus was then already widely spread in Slavic countries "that such a messenger should have been sent to him as the leader of the national party in Bohemia." Hus sent a congratulatory letter in reply. This has recently been found and published. In it Hus expresses a wish to meet the king and visit Poland—doubtless, in the interest of church reform. He, further, entreats the King of Poland to live on good terms with King Sigismund of Hungary. (King Sigismund, however, attacked Poland, so that Hus was not successful in his attempt to prevent hostilities between the two monarchs.) Two years later, during the time of the disturbances in Prague over the sale of the indulgences, Hus wrote the second time to King Vladislav. He begins by expressing joy over the reëstablishment of peace with King Sigismund. Then, very clearly, he tells his hopes with regard to church reform and the suppression of abuses. These interesting letters show that it was Hus who first established friendly relations between the two Slavic countries, Poland and Bohemia. He hoped that they would be able jointly to destroy the terrible evils from which the Church suffered. The Slav peoples did rally to such a cause, which to them was almost as much national as religious. Doubtless, as a consequence of this correspondence of Hus with the King of Poland, the ambassadors of Vladislav endeavoured, so far as their diplomatic position permitted, to save Hus at Constance. Vladislav kept up friendly relations with the Bohemian church reformers, "who at one time offered him the Bohemian crown."

In Prague and Bohemia, Hus became increasingly popular through his fearless stand and diversified activity. His position against the sale of indulgences marks a turning point in the history of the Bohemian reformation. The message of his preaching, teaching and writing stood in sharp contrast to the doctrine and practice of a corrupt

Church that could countenance such a procedure as the sale of indulgences. People were being more and more enlightened through the ministry of Hus. While friends deserted him, he gained many new supporters among the nobility and the lower classes. The tide seemed to turn in his favour. But his enemies were increasingly active. They made use of every argument and opportunity to rouse the vast power of the Church to crush him. In course of this year of disturbances in Prague, 1412, the parish priests of the city sent to the pope two documents full of complaints against Hus. To their former grievances they added a new one. Hus had blamed the pope's action in granting indulgences. With this charge they were more successful in their attack on Hus. Moreover, they found a wily and utterly unscrupulous agent at the pope's court. This was Michael of Deutschbrod, generally known as Michael de Causis—the pope had appointed him *procurator de causis fidei*, advocate in matters of faith. His reputation was of the worst. Once a parish priest in Bohemia, he had neglected his duties and endeavoured to obtain money by means fair or foul. He had devised for King Venceslas some new method of working the royal mines and then had absconded with the money entrusted to him. Guessing shrewdly that his money and his cunning would be welcome, he then offered his services to Pope John. In the employ of that master, he proved a most subtle knave and serviceable tool. Eventually, he was one of the chief agents in bringing about the martyrdom of Hus.

Thanks mainly to the energy of this notorious Michael de Causis, the cause of Hus was lost at the papal court, where the reformer's representatives were still pleading for him when the complaints of the parish clergy arrived from Prague. A papal bull was published excommunicating Hus in the severest form known to the papacy.

The great curse was pronounced upon him. No man was to associate with him ; no man was to give him food or drink ; no man was to grant him a place where he might rest his head ; wherever he stayed religious services were to cease ; in case of his death he was not to receive Christian burial. If within twenty-three days he did not yield, he was to be excommunicated "in all churches, monasteries and chapels" with the usual custom of "lighted candles extinguished and thrown to the ground."

The enemies of Hus do not seem to have been satisfied even with this. Their victory at the papal court was not sufficiently complete. Again through the agency of Michael de Causis, a bull was obtained from that monster Pope John XXIII, directed especially against the reformer. In this the faithful were ordered to seize the person of Hus and deliver him up to the archbishop to be burned. The bull, further, decreed that the Bethlehem Chapel, "a nest of heretics," should be torn down to its foundations. Besides, the interdict was again proclaimed against the city. This time it was carried out thoroughly, with all the accompanying horrors that terrified devout Catholic minds in those days. A troop of German fanatics attempted to seize Hus while he was in his pulpit. But such was the determined, though peaceful, attitude of the large congregation present that they retired in confusion. Somewhat later Romanist citizens attacked the Chapel, only to be repulsed by adherents of Hus who were keeping watch.

In view of these furious attacks, Hus prepared a dignified appeal from the pope to Jesus Christ, the supreme and righteous Judge "who is neither influenced by gifts nor deceived by false witnesses." This he read from the pulpit and publicly posted. Since he thus took an attitude of open opposition to the highest authorities of the Church, the question may be asked, why did he persist in

claiming the rights of a member of the Roman Catholic Church? Why did he not openly break off all connection with the Church, instead of trying to maintain himself as a member in good standing? The best answer is that in those days of schism, of quarrels between rival popes, of the rising of new ideas as to final authority, good Catholics everywhere were questioning or denying the claims of the papacy. They had different grounds for doing it. None of them did it quite so clearly as did Hus. Amid such conflicts of opinion and because of the wars of the popes, councils and doctors, he cherished with reason the hope that his purer and more Scriptural views of the Church might have some chance to prevail and thus a true reform be brought about from within.

In this crisis of the life of Hus, the masters and students of the university stood with him, almost without exception. There, too, his influence was powerful. Only eight doctors of the theological faculty united in opposing him. These men, including Stanislas and Palec, the former friends of Hus, made two attempts in disputation to subdue him. They signally failed. Hus was too completely armed with the weapons of the truth and used them with too much skill.

Hus and the Interdict. Meanwhile, the interdict was mercilessly enforced in the city. This greatly troubled the mind of Hus. Those who thought with him simply disregarded the interdict. But a large part of the Catholic population was compelled to observe the papal commands and suffered great inconvenience. Hus was in doubt whether he should leave the city for a time or remain there. After some consideration, he concluded that it would be wiser to withdraw temporarily from the walls of the city. There was no doubt that the cause he loved would still have able advocates. It would be clear, if he

withdrew, that this cause was not bound up in the person of one man and was not dependent on his presence. Correspondence with friends could keep him informed of whatever might occur in his absence. At any time it would be possible for him to return. Towards the close of 1412, he, therefore, left the city. This decision is, next to his resolution to proceed to the Council of Constance, the most momentous in his life.

Further Writings of Hus. Thus the polemical period, as it has been called, in the life of Hus came to an end. His writings during this time were not numerous. They are all in Latin and of a controversial character. One of them is a treatise that enlarges upon the arguments which Hus used in his disputation with the Englishman Stokes, on the doctrines of Wyclif. It is chiefly valuable as proving that Hus was by no means a blind and unreasoning follower of Wyclif, though he approved of much of his teaching. Another of the Latin treatises is directed against a secret adversary, a person known to have been a priest who quietly took notes on the sermons of Hus and attacked him by means of a written statement affixed to the pulpit of the Bethlehem Chapel. In this treatise Hus dwells on the duty of kings and lords to restrain the wickedness of the clergy and to suppress the shameful traffic in sacred things. During the period of strife the popular movement at Prague in favour of reform had begun to attract attention generally throughout Christendom. It was discussed at Paris and at Oxford as well as at Rome. By his labours during the period of retirement, the work of Hus gained yet wider influence and secured what proved to be more lasting impression.

V

HUS IN EXILE

Work of Hus Uninterrupted. The withdrawal of Hus from Prague did not really interrupt his work. It only removed him to another sphere of action, where his influence was felt, in the end, as powerfully as in the city. Compared to the years of constant strife, the period of his exile, lasting nearly two years, does not appear momentous, it is true. Nor can it be compared, in interest, to the time of his residence at Constance, which comprises his imprisonment and sufferings and the death that has made him immortal. Yet he found or made opportunity for the continuance of his great, many-sided work, if less intensely, then in a more extended field. The momentum of his past activity and his fervour did not suffer him to rest. He did not forget in exile the principles he had avowed before the archbishop and which had moved him to persist in preaching in the Bethlehem Chapel. They were equally powerful with him now. By reason of them, there was not another man in the kingdom whose influence was equal with his own. His character, ability, position and doctrines, even the persecution that had driven him into temporary exile, had conspired to elevate him in popular esteem and to give publicity and effect to his uttered or written sentiments. During the months of exile he devoted himself, in part, to preaching but mainly to literary work.

Movements of Hus. The movements of Hus after he left Prague cannot be traced with certainty. As was the

case a century later when Luther found refuge at the Wartburg, Hus and his friends thought it advisable that his dwelling-place should remain, for a time, unknown. As a matter of fact, he made shorter or longer stays at various places. Probably, he went first to southern Bohemia. An ancient and attractive tradition states that he visited Husinec, his birthplace, and preached there. Wherever he went he preached. No place was too profane or sacred for holding forth the Word of God. Denied a church, he accepted God's first temples, the groves and fields. He himself writes, "Hitherto, I have preached in towns and market-places, now I preach behind hedges, in villages, castles, fields and woods." He mentions specially as a favourite pulpit "a lime tree near Kozi." He drove from place to place, in order to reach, in time, points far separated. Rural Bohemia witnessed scenes like those which long before had consecrated the waysides and hillsides of Palestine, which were later to become familiar to the persecuted congregations of the Pyrenees Mountains, which drew crowds of Hollanders abroad for days, leaving their busy towns and cities almost as silent as the grave, which made the wild glens of Scottish highlands echo to the voices of persecuted men who had a price on their heads. These scenes gave to hamlets, forests and castles of Bohemia a tender renown far beyond that of natural scenery or of deeds of martial valour.

Throngs crowded to hear him. They were curious to see the famous preacher of Prague, a man bold enough to defy edicts of excommunication, who had been driven out of the capital by the interdict but whose blameless life shamed his persecutors. Poor peasants and nobles flocked around him to hear his forcible expositions and applications of the Word of God. The head of the University of Prague had left his seat of honour and the cultivated

Husinec

Birthplace of John Hus

circles of the lecture-room to speak to the multitudes of the land, ignorant or enlightened. His eloquence was as effective here in the open fields as in the Bethlehem Chapel. Hus had always laid great stress on preaching. "Preachers," he said, "in my judgment count in the Church for more than prelates." He proved the truth of the assertion, as he pursued his apostolic mission from city to city and village to village in the days of his exile. The impression made upon the crowds that came to hear him from homes, fields and workshops was in many cases deep and abiding. Years did not efface it. When Hus later was languishing in prison at Constance, there were thousands of his countrymen, in all parts of Bohemia, on whose hearts his memory was deeply engraven by the experience wrought within them through the words he uttered at this time.

As a result of these labours, the doctrines of Hus spread on every hand, in cottage and castle, in Prague and in the country. And from this period is to be dated the immense popularity of Hus—a popularity that clings to his memory to the present day. Hus was fully aware of the deep affection his countrymen cherished for him and he gloried in it. We see this consciousness of it in the proud answer he made at Constance to the questions of Cardinal D'Ailly, "Yes, I have said that I came here of my own free will. If I had been unwilling to come here, neither that king (Venceslas) nor this (Sigismund) would have been able to force me to come, so numerous and so powerful are the Bohemian nobles who love me, and within whose castles I should have been able to lie concealed."

Continued Controversy. Away from Prague and removed from the immediate neighbourhood of his most implacable foes, the life of Hus was one of comparative

quiet. But it was not altogether free from controversy. Before Hus had left Prague the king had promised him to resume his efforts to reëstablish religious concord in Bohemia. The king kept his word. Upon the advice of the Estates of Bohemia, the highest body of advisers in the realm, he called together a synod of the Bohemian clergy, which was to mediate between the contending parties. The synod met early in 1413. Its task was a difficult one. The opponents of church-reform, considering the withdrawal of Hus from Prague a signal victory, were averse to any compromise. They presented to the assembly a statement declaring that the present discord had been caused by some priests who were disobedient to their superiors and had spread heresies. They demanded that the papal decrees should be obeyed and that Hus should be delivered up to the authorities of the state for punishment.

The church reformers, in their statement, demanded that Hus should be allowed to appear before the synod in his own defense, and that if no one was prepared to bring accusations against him, which could be proven, his slanderers should be punished. The university, also, forwarded a document to the synod, which expressed more fully the views of the Bohemian reformers. The puritanic note of this spirited declaration is very striking. From a searching review of the dissensions of the country and the disorders of the Church, it concludes that all customs which had been introduced contrary to Christ's law should be everywhere put down. As was to be expected, the synod soon separated without effecting any settlement of the controversy. The king was greatly disappointed at the failure of the synod to restore peace. Next, he appointed a commission. This, also, was unsuccessful, owing chiefly to the bitter opposition of Palec and Stanislas, former friends of Hus. Thereupon, re-

buked by the commission and fearing the wrath of the king, these men and two others of like mind left the country. In foreign parts they were very active in stirring up prejudice against Hus. So far as Bohemia was concerned, the departure of these men put an end to the disputes, for the time being, but not to the parties.

The parties carried on a wordy warfare by means of numerous books and pamphlets. The citizens of Prague took increasing interest in the questions at stake. Bohemia has ever been one of those countries, where, as in England and Scotland, theological controversies have greatly attracted the masses of the people. The adherents of the parties gave each other nicknames. The upholders of reform were called "Wyclifites," as their opponents identified the teachings of Hus with those of Wyclif. The opponents of reform were dubbed "Mohammedans," this strange byname being given them, probably, because of the violence with which they supported their doctrines. Amid all discussion and banter, the cause of reform steadily advanced. Its adherents, by their study of the Scriptures, were attaining views more and more evangelical. They came to be known as the evangelical party. The seed which Hus had sown was ripening to its harvest. Many had adopted his views and with a zeal equal to his own, though not always as discreet, spread them abroad.

The evangelical party was manifestly in the ascendent. This was emphasized by a political success. A great change was brought about in the membership of the Council of Prague through the provisions of a royal decree. This instituted a new method for the appointment of the councillors. The council had consisted mainly of foreigners, who were on the side of the papal party and had attempted the destruction of the Bethlehem Chapel. Now the Czechs secured control. The whole of civic authority

in the city was committed to Hus's side. The church authorities were powerless. They considered Bohemia almost hopelessly lost to Romanism. Something must be done, they reasoned, to check the spreading heresy. But there was no hope in the king; he still favoured Hus and was merely amused at the complaints of the clergy. There was no hope in the barons; they openly sympathized with Hus. The university was already lost to the papal party. Help, if any was to be found, must come from abroad. Hence, the conviction grew among the enemies of the reformer, that Hus could be managed and his heresy checked only by a general council of the Church. When, for other reasons, the calling of such a council began to be agitated all over Europe, the clergy in Bohemia lost no time in laying their plans. All the weight and authority of the council should be made to bear down upon the Hus movement. The condemnation of Hus should be achieved. The aid of foreign rulers should be invoked to crush reform in Bohemia.

Hus Remains in Exile. In the meantime, the heat of controversy died down in Prague. The adherents of Hus were no longer molested. Hus found it possible to return. He seems to have paid a number of visits to the city. Tradition says that he even preached at the Bethlehem Chapel. But he did not remain in Prague. His presence there, when known, always created a stir. There was ever the danger of the renewal of the interdict. The cause of church reform was flourishing even in his absence. Should its interests demand his personal attention, he could at any time return.

While, for these reasons, he continued a voluntary exile, he was not a wanderer without a home. As in the case of Luther, the favourite of the high and the lowly, more than one lord's castle opened its gates and offered

him refuge. It is certain that he spent some time at the castle of Kozi Hradek, and afterwards he accepted an invitation to go to the castle of Krakovec, which was nearer the capital. Like Luther, he spent the leisure thus afforded him in the writing of some of his most important works. Released from his duties at the university, free from the distractions of his life at Prague, it is not unlikely that the time of exile was the happiest in his life. And, no doubt, by his carefully prepared and powerful works he did as much for the cause of truth and freedom as if he had remained in Prague. Country lords and knights were afterwards found to be his most zealous defenders and the most earnest supporters of reform.

Literary Activity. The time of leisure Hus improved by the use of his pen. He had the opportunity to examine more carefully and state more fully his doctrines and views. His works are voluminous and varied. It is not possible to state with certainty how many shorter or longer books and treatises came from his hand. Some of his writings have long ago been lost. Others have only recently been rediscovered and published. A number of scholars have searched for and examined Hus literature. One of the latest and most trustworthy of them, Dr. Flajshans, counts up seventy-four Latin, one German and thirty-six Bohemian works of Hus. While some of these were written during his earlier ministry and others were composed in prison at Constance, the years of exile, 1412–1414, were the period of his greatest literary activity. His writings enable us to appreciate thoroughly the real nature of Hus. They prove that he was entirely guided by religious and national enthusiasm. The fine points of theological controversy did not greatly appeal to him, though he was a skillful scholastic reasoner who could hold his own over against very learned accusers at Constance.

Reference has already been made to some of the earlier Latin works of Hus. His treatise on the Church (*De Ecclesia*), written during this period, is the most elaborate and systematic of his Latin works. In it his doctrinal system—to be outlined below—is connectedly stated. It was from this work mainly that his enemies drew material for their charges against him. It attacked, as a prominent cardinal at Constance remarked, through an endless multitude of arguments the papal authority. A Roman Catholic writer of the time, grasping the full bearing of its argument, admits the marked ability of this production. It reduced the whole cumbrous system of priestly rule to a heap of rubbish. It made the faith that works by love, not organic connection with the priest-controlled Romish body, the condition of membership in the spiritual Church of Christ. It made all human distinctions of rank shrink to insignificance before the ennobling relation which the humblest member of the Church sustains to Christ, its head. Here was a basis, indeed, for the sweeping reforms Hus was constantly urging. He was in spirit a Protestant—a Puritan—before these terms were known.

Among the other Latin works of Hus, controversial treatises abound. Hus was "ever a fighter." Incessantly attacked by opponents, he naturally became engaged in frequent disputations. His treatises of this character gave precision to the views of the party he represented. The dividing lines were sharply drawn. Each new collision brought the combatants back to the old battle-ground, for the real question at issue was between the authority of the pope and the authority of the Scriptures. The anxiety of Hus in behalf of the sacred cause of truth knew no intermission. His warfare with error and iniquity was incessant. From his own declarations we know that his inner conflict and questionings

were severe. Yet he never wavered. Not for a moment did he so far forget his position or his duty as to yield to a guilty compromise. Amid surging agitations he stands firm as a rock amid the billows.

The Bohemian writings of Hus give an even clearer insight into the individuality of Hus. One of the most notable of these is the short book, *O Svatokupectvi*—On Simony, or Traffic in Holy Things. This deals with the real cause of Bohemian troubles of this period. It discusses the question whether men who had obtained church offices by foul and unworthy means could truly and validly administer the sacraments. Hus scores the practice of traffic in church offices as a form of heresy. He describes its origin and development. Its beginnings, he tells us, are traceable to two notorious characters in the Scriptures, Gehazi, who took gifts for the healing of Naaman, and Simon who gave the apostles money, wishing to obtain the power of conferring the Holy Ghost on men by the laying on of hands, and from whom we have the terms simonists and simony. Next, Hus deals with simony as it appears in the different ranks of the clergy. And, finally, he endeavours to find a remedy for the terrible abuses. "The best way" (to prevent simony), he writes, "would be that men be elected bishops and parish priests according to God's will. Thus did the apostles act, having no revelation as to whom they should receive as bishop in the place of Judas."

Another of Hus's most valuable Bohemian works is the Postilla. This is a collection of sermons on the Gospel for every Sunday and the more important holy days of the year. Hus indicates its purpose in the introduction, "I resolved for the glory of God, and for the salvation of the faithful Bohemians who wish to know and to fulfill God's will, briefly to expound, with God's help, the Gospel for all the Sundays of the year. I desire that

those who read or listen be saved, that they may beware of sin, love God above all things, love one another, increase in virtue and pray to the Lord God for me, sinner." Alluding to the ignorance of the Bible that was general among the Bohemians he writes, "As the people generally have no Gospel written in Bohemian, and it is difficult to understand an exposition without a foundation, therefore will I always place the Gospel at the beginning of the exposition." The Bohemians thus became acquainted with, at least, a part of the Holy Scriptures, which was read out to them in their own language. The sermons are admirable and very practical expositions of Scripture truth, couched in clear, bright expressions that render the Postilla very attractive.

The letters of Hus, written in his own language, are, perhaps, the most precious literary memorial of him that we possess. Eighty-two of these, written in his early or later life, have been preserved. "They form a priceless memorial of one of the truest-hearted sons of God." His later correspondence, particularly his letters from exile and from prison, show John Hus to be one of the few great spirits that exalt humanity. As one writer puts it, they "have enriched forever our moral outlook." They show the strength and the tenderness of the man. When Luther chanced upon a copy of the letters of Hus, he at once perceived their value. He published translations of four of them, including the famed letter to the whole Bohemian nation, in German and Latin, in 1536. A year later, a larger collection of Hus's letters was printed under Luther's influence. In an introduction to that volume, the German Reformer is not backward in his praises of the letters. "Observe," he writes, "how firmly Hus clung in his writings and words to the doctrines of Christ; with what courage he struggled against the agonies of death; with what patience and humility he

suffered every indignity, and with what greatness of soul he at last confronted a cruel death in defense of the truth; doing all things alone before an imposing assembly of the great ones of the earth, like a lamb in the midst of lions and wolves. If such a man is to be regarded as a heretic, no person under the sun can be looked on as a true Christian. By what fruits then shall we recognize the truth, if it is not manifest by those with which John Hus was so richly adorned?" The latest letters of Hus are the most interesting, for in them the personal note is finest, yet in the whole list there is nothing unworthy, nothing tedious. Bishop Creighton, a noted divine of the Anglican Church, is correct in his judgment: "Everything Hus writes is the result of his own soul's experience, is penetrated with a deep moral earnestness, illuminated with a boldness and self-forgetfulness that breathes the spirit of the cry, 'Let God be true and every man a liar.'"

Publication of Hus Literature. It is of more than ordinary interest and a proof of the great fame of Hus that some of his works were among the earliest of printed books. The first of his writings that appears to have been printed was one of his lesser treatises. No copy of this has been preserved. In 1459—only a few years after the invention of printing with movable types—two of his letters were, for the first time, printed at Constance. There have been various reprints of most of his important works, especially of his letters, which will, doubtless, be read more than any of his works for years to come.

Doctrines of Hus. Any review of the doctrines of Hus, as presented in his writings, should start with his views regarding the Holy Scriptures. These he holds to be of primary importance. In all questions of faith and

life, he teaches, the Bible is the only infallible norm. This position does not involve a rejection of the doctrinal explanations of the church fathers or the decrees of the councils or the laws of the Church, provided that such explanations, decrees and laws agree with the Word of God. Even that which is merely implied may be accepted, if it be not contrary to the clear instructions of the sacred volume.

The doctrines relating to God and His attributes, to the creation, preservation and government of the world, to the Trinity, to the person and work of Christ, to the Holy Ghost and His functions, he accepts in their authorized form. With regard to other doctrines he differs more or less decidedly from the views of the Church of his time.

As to the natural state of man he says, "Man, on account of sin, is blind, impotent, full of error and exceedingly poor. He is blind because he does not properly recognize God; impotent, because he is unable to accomplish anything in the way of his own salvation; full of error, because he does not walk in the holy laws of God, which are the way of God; and poor, because he has lost everything that he possessed."

Proceeding to the doctrines involving salvation, we find, to begin with, that there are sayings of Hus which imply predestination in its extreme form. On comparing them, however, with other sayings of his on the same subject, his position becomes milder and more Scriptural. He teaches that the grace of God is universal, that it is God's will that all men should be saved, that He does all He can, consistently with their free will, to bring about their salvation. He unites predestination with the foreknowledge of God.

The views of Hus on faith and justification bring us to a position which is evangelical to a surprising degree.

True faith works by love and endures to the end. There is a dead faith which even the devils have and tremble. The former alone saves. Faith "is a state of mind in which eternal life begins in us and induces our understanding to assent to the unseen but irrefutable truths which the inspired Scriptures reveal in a divine way." "It is the foundation of the other virtues with which the Church of Christ is in fellowship." Such faith alone justifies. "Through the law no one is justified, but through faith in Christ, because He removes from us the way of iniquity."

In regard to the Church, Hus expresses his views at great length. On the basis of Scripture principles he builds up his teachings concerning the Church. He takes what may be called decided Protestant ground. With such a conception of the Church, he finds the whole system of the Romish papacy radically wrong. This rests on the false idea that Christ made Peter pope. But Christ never transferred His authority to one apostle, and Peter never claimed the primacy. One man, mortal and fallible, cannot possibly govern the Church scattered over the whole earth. The laity have rights and privileges in the Church as well as the clergy and civil rulers. The truly great ones in the Church are faithful Christians keeping the commandments. Unquestioning obedience to fallible men cannot be required. To rebel against an erring pope is to obey the Lord Jesus Christ. Remembering the age in which he lived, the position of Hus in his teaching concerning the Church is remarkable. He had advanced towards the true idea, the simple church order of Protestant organization in our own day. He would have been prepared to join hands with John Calvin at Geneva or the Pilgrim Fathers on the *Mayflower*.

Among the means of grace which have been appointed in the Church, the Word and the sacraments attract his

special attention. As regards the former, its divine origin, power and sufficiency and the fact that it has been given for the salvation of man captivate his whole heart. He urges that it must be absolutely free. His conviction of the inestimable price of the Word and the necessity of proclaiming it is shown by the interesting circumstance that the earliest letter which we have from his hand urges upon the archbishop the necessity of providing for the preaching of the Gospel, and that his last letter, written a week before his death, closes with the solemn exhortation, addressed to Hawlik, his pupil, then in charge of the Bethlehem Chapel, "Preach the Word of God."

In some respects, Hus had not worked himself free from Romish doctrine. This is instanced in his teaching concerning the sacraments. Hus recognizes the seven of the Romish creed. But he protests against abuses and teaches that God alone gives them efficacy, for which faith on the part of the recipient is an absolute condition.

The views of Hus on the Virgin Mary and the saints are undecided. Sometimes, he appears to teach the Romish doctrine and then, again, he seems to reject it. At all times, however, he warns against the abuses to which prayers addressed to the Virgin Mary and the saints may lead. Adoration, in the true sense, is never to be given to a creature.

He believes in the existence of purgatory and he does not condemn prayers for souls there undergoing purification. He knows that the Bible gives no warrant for such prayers, but they seem to him to grow naturally out of the communion of saints. In this matter, too, he protests against the evils which the usage produces. Nor does he fail to teach that salvation can be gained on earth alone, and that the surest way to eternal life is to follow, in this life, the instructions of Christ and the apostles. In one

of his sermons he says, "Who knows of a single soul that has been freed from purgatory by thirty masses."

Such is, in brief outline, the doctrinal system of Hus. It is imperfect, but it contains all the elements of a body of pure divinity. It develops some of them to evangelical completeness. Had his days been prolonged, he would have attained to a still clearer insight into the truth. As it is, Luther, in 1529, after considering the matter with Melancthon, wrote to Spalatin, "I have hitherto taught and held all the opinions of Hus without knowing it. With a like unconsciousness has Staupitz taught them. We are all of us Hussites without knowing it."

Hus and the Bohemian Language. The merits of Hus as a Bohemian writer can hardly be overestimated. What Luther did for the German, Calvin for the French, Hus succeeded in doing for the Bohemian. Each was the father of his native tongue in its modern form. Like the Bohemian patriots of all periods, Hus was devotedly attached to the native language. In his efforts to strengthen it, he opposed foreign elements that were creeping in. He saw, also, that the Bohemian tongue, in order to become exclusively the language of the state and of the scholars of Bohemia, needed improvement in many respects. Even in the matter of spelling great disorder prevailed. No generally accepted rules were observed. In the written documents and in the language of the people there still remained traces of the several dialects out of which the Bohemian language grew. Hus attempted to establish a generally recognized written language for the territory including Bohemia, Moravia and Silesia, in all of which the Bohemian language is spoken. He was the first to attempt this. Through the work of later writers the effort was finally successful.

While still residing in Prague, Hus had laboured for

the improvement of his native language. The first result of his studies was his *Orthographica Bohemica*, written probably in 1411. Unlike other Slavic peoples, the Bohemians had adopted the Latin alphabetic characters. These are incapable of representing various sounds peculiar to Slavic speech. "Anarchy of spelling" had resulted from this inability. Many attempts had been made to overcome the difficulties. Hus was the first who, in the treatise just mentioned, reformed the alphabet by introducing the diacritic signs—marks attached to letters or characters to indicate their exact sound value or to distinguish them from other letters. These, in a modified form, are still used in the Bohemian language. The new system of spelling which Hus introduced was distinguished for its precision and simplicity. While in exile, Hus devoted yet more attention to his native language, for he had many opportunities of hearing the common talk of the country people to whom he preached. Hus himself tells us that he formed his style on the common speech of the people. This he dignified and raised to the rank of a language adequate for the expression of theological and philosophical thought.

Hus Revises Bohemian Bible. Having accomplished so much for the language, he was in a position to revise the Bohemian Bible and make its teachings more accessible to his countrymen. It appears that in the fourteenth century parts of the Bible had been translated into Bohemian by various writers. These parts had been collected and joined together about 1410. The translations were of unequal merit. Some teemed with damaging mistakes. Some were rough Bohemian, others bore witness to the learning of scholars. Hus, familiar with the Hebrew language, undertook the difficult task of revising and correcting the existing translations of the Bible. By

this work as well as by his Scripture exposition, he made the Scriptures more generally known among his countrymen.

Plans for a General Church Council. While Hus by travelling, preaching, writing was making even the months of exile richly fruitful for the work of reform, negotiations were being conducted for the meeting of a general church council in the interests of reform. But what was to be a council of reform is now remembered chiefly for its condemnation of the greatest reformer of that day. Among all who urged the calling of the council, King Sigismund was most intent on furthering the project. He had personal reasons for doing so. Besides being King of Hungary, he now bore the title King of the Romans—this indicated that he had been elected to succeed to the imperial power. He rightly thought that nothing could contribute more to the restoration of the faded dignity of the empire than a general council of the Church under his control in an imperial free city. Should the council succeed in terminating the schism, that would help to revive the glories of the Roman Empire.

Conditions were favourable to the scheme of the ambitious Sigismund. The state of the Church was steadily growing worse. The disgraceful schism, the corruption of the clergy, wickedness among the members of the Church were producing alarming results. Iniquity, in many shapes, stalked abroad unchecked and defiant. Affairs were so unsettled and men's minds were so divided and distracted that kings and princes felt it necessary to interfere. The best minds in the Church were calling for a remedy. The doctrine was proclaimed from high places that a council of the whole Church is superior to any member of it, even to the pope himself. The heresies of Wyclif and of Hus alarmed all good Catholics.

These were looked upon as symptoms of wide-spread dissatisfaction and should be cured or crushed.

Yet, though there was demand from diverse and distant quarters for summoning the council, the negotiations were long drawn out and delicate. Some rulers were secretly ill disposed to the plan. Pope John, in view of his unsavoury reputation, had reason to hesitate. There was a great deal of skillful manœuvering between the crafty emperor and the wily pope. At last the persuasions of the emperor—persuasions pointed with threats and terrors—induced Pope John to join in preparing for the council. It was summoned to meet at Constance in October, 1414.

To the humble priest, John Hus, Sigismund also assigned a part in his far-reaching plans. He had followed the course of Hus from the beginning. Sigismund was heir to the throne of Bohemia. He felt the need of removing from that land the stain of heresy. He realized keenly that "throughout the whole earth resounded the rumour that the Bohemians were sons of heretical baseness." Sigismund did not doubt that the pious Hus, whose actions were governed entirely by his conscience, would deem it his duty to appear at the council. The king reasoned that it would be possible to prevent the return of Hus to Bohemia. And he believed—wrongly as events proved—that Hussitism, Hus once out of the way, would soon come to an end. Accordingly, he despatched from Lombardy, where he happened to be, certain Bohemian noblemen of his court to bid Master John Hus to present himself at Constance, there to purge both himself and the kingdom of Bohemia from the infamous charge of heresy. They were to inform him that the king would grant him a safe-conduct, which would enable him to journey safely to Constance and guarantee a safe return to Bohemia. Sigismund, also, promised that he would obtain for Hus a hearing at the council.

Hus at once prepared to obey. In view of his own appeal to a general council, he could not do otherwise. There were not wanting warning voices that advised him not to go. Many of the prominent members of the university entreated him to remain in Bohemia. Nobles were prepared to defend him in their castles. Even one of Sigismund's envoys said to Hus, "Master, be sure that thou wilt be condemned." Yet he remained firm. He did not neglect to take steps for his defense. He posted notices throughout the whole of Prague, offering "to render an account of his faith and hope" before the synod of the Bohemian clergy which was to meet in August of 1414. The synod refused to receive him. Then he secured, through a representative, from Nicholas, Bishop of Nazareth, the inquisitor of heresy for the city and diocese of Prague, a statement declaring "him to be a true and Catholic man, in no wise savouring of heresy or error." Certain of the nobles procured a similar declaration from the archbishop. Thus accredited, he started on his last journey, without fear, without sign of flinching. There is no touch of blind fanaticism in his bearing, as his prudent preparations show. He had something of the fighter in him, else he could not have defied opposition as he had done. His imaginative power, which helped to make him the brilliant preacher and man of affairs, made it clear to him that he could anticipate a cruel fate. Yet under all his intellectual life there throbbed a valorous restlessness that drove him forward to meet emergency. He had in him the pith and the sinew of a hero. The history of martyrdom scarcely furnishes a nobler, purer example of Christian witness-bearing. From first to last, his attitude and action present a model of quiet firmness and of unbending but undemonstrative consistency.

It was as providential as remarkable that the general

church council should make it part of its program to deal with an individual case of alleged heresy. This unusual course gave greater publicity to the event and greater renown to the man and his doctrines. Otherwise, Hus might have fallen in some obscure way and his memory would have been merely a local matter. His heroic faith and fearless stand in the presence of the council that condemned him brought it about that he "belongs to the ages."

VI

HUS AT CONSTANCE

COUNCIL of Constance. The Council of Constance was the most brilliant and imposing of the ecclesiastical assemblies of the middle ages. Its sessions stretched through nearly four years. From all parts of western Christendom distinguished men attended. The streets of the city were a blaze of gorgeous colour with the crowds of splendidly garbed dignitaries, with waving plumes and polished armour, with flaunting standards and long cavalcades. Pope and emperor were both present, each with a numerous and dazzling following of officers and attendants. All classes of society, laity as well as clergy, representatives of every European nation, with their peculiarities of costume and manner, contributed to make the city of Constance a miniature Christendom. Besides emperor and pope, there came to this celebrated council thirty cardinals, four patriarchs, thirty-three archbishops, one hundred and fifty bishops, several hundred doctors of theology and prelates and four thousand priests, four electors, twenty-four princes and dukes, seventy-eight counts and over six hundred barons. Literature and science were not unworthily represented. Eleven universities of Europe sent deputations. Among them were men whom the afterworld honours as the living lights of their age. In addition to all of these, a throng of merchants, artisans, retainers, visitors, drawn by curiosity, the desire of gain or of pleasure, flowed into

the city to witness the doings of the council. This unexampled array of sovereigns and nobles, leaders of the Church and laymen numbered no less than fifty thousand, perhaps the greatest congress of people the world has ever seen. The objects of the council were worthy of so great a gathering. As originally mapped out, they were the restoration of the unity of the Church and its reform in head and members. It is striking proof of the prominence to which the Bohemian affairs had attained that to them, also, had to be assigned a place of first importance on the program of the great council.

Constance. Constance is a town in the grand duchy of Baden. It is beautifully situated on the Swiss, or left, bank of the Rhine, just as the river issues from Lake Constance to form the Untersee. At the time of the council it was a free, imperial city, with a population of fifty thousand. Now it has but half that number of inhabitants. As the attendants upon the council were equal in number to the population, booths and wooden buildings were erected for their accommodation, outside the city walls, and thousands of visitors were encamped in the surrounding country. Exactly what proportion of those who attended were regarded as members of the council, entitled to take part in its proceedings, it is difficult to say. Certainly, there was no place of assembly in Constance that would have admitted a gathering of even five thousand men. The place of meeting was the Kaufhaus, Merchant's Exchange, built in 1338, close to the shores of the lake. This building, still standing, offered the best audience chamber in the city. As the traveller goes up the solid steps of the structure, he enters on the second floor a spacious room, the low ceiling of which is supported by heavy wooden pillars. Five hundred years ago, this room was occupied by an as-

Merchants' Exchange, Official Meeting-place of the Council of Constance

sembly such as Christendom had never seen before. Here many of the sessions were held, others were conducted in the cathedral. The chair in which the emperor sat and the one used by the pope are still preserved. Other relics, both of Hus and his colabourer, Jerome, are said to be numerous in the city.

Pope John on the Way to Constance. Towards this city, in the fall of 1414, travelled two men, utterly differing in character, under very different circumstances, destined to play strikingly different rôles at the council. One of them was Pope John. He had had prolonged negotiations with the emperor, in which each had tried to deceive the other. He had made all kinds of demands and tried to secure the most advantageous terms for himself, all of which were signed and sworn to by the emperor. Yet Pope John set out with fears and forebodings as to the result. We have not the slightest evidence that an awakened conscience was the cause of his uncomfortable state of mind. His evil life had so hardened his heart that his only concern was lest he should lose his honours and his income and be reduced to the position of a private individual. He travelled as a prince, with a splendid escort of cardinals and nobles. Gold, silver, gems and costly raiment added to the magnificence of the princely train. Travelling through Tyrol, the pope paused there to confirm his alliance with Duke Frederick of Austria, according to which each was bound to support the other in his designs. Towards the end of October, the papal party approached Constance. When the pope looked down upon the city for the first time, from a neighbouring hill, he called it a pit for catching foxes. He may have had a presentiment of his own fate. It did prove a trap for him and for nobler game. With such feelings and fear he entered the city with

great pomp, and he was escorted with every demonstration of honour to the episcopal palace.

Hus on the Way to Constance. At the same time, Hus was pursuing his way to the city, where he was to close his career and receive the crown of martyrdom. As he was a man of truly apostolical poverty, his friends raised the money for so lengthy a journey. Many of the nobles, probably, also, the king and queen, and the university supplied some financial aid. One of the nobles presented him with a comfortable carriage, others gave him horses. On October 11, 1414, Hus left Prague, accompanied by Lord John von Chlum, Lord Venceslas von Duba, whom Sigismund had appointed as his escort, Peter Mladenovic, secretary of von Chlum, and some attendants. A throng of people, including many masters of the university, accompanied him to the city gate. Instinctively, they saw in Hus the greatest man of their race. Many feared that he would never return. Later, the travelling party was joined by Lord Henry von Chlum and John Reinstein, surnamed "Kardinal," a parish priest of Prague and a great friend of Hus.

The route lay through the border town, Bärnau, to the imperial free city of Nuremberg, which they reached in eight days' time. On their way thus far, even in German territory, they were everywhere well received by the people who saw in Hus the champion of church reform. In nearly every town Hus had theological discussions with the clergy and others. All ill-feeling, previously stirred up by hostile reports, seemed lost in curiosity to see and hear the man of whom such varied stories had been told. The earnestness of his speech and the reasonableness of his views won him favour. The common people and humbler clergy felt that he had been fighting their battles and was now suffering in their cause. They

saw in him one whom persecuting rage had forced into notoriety but who, in setting himself against haughtiness, avarice and corruption, priestly or otherwise, had really shown himself the friend of the poor and oppressed.

At Nuremberg the welcome was particularly hearty. The streets were crowded with people eager to see Hus. A public disputation was held. Priests, a doctor of theology, magistrates were among those assembled. The discussion continued for hours. The popular voice was on the side of the reformer. All united in assuring Hus that he would undoubtedly return from the council with honour. He could write to his Bohemian friends, "I have not met a single enemy as yet." At Nuremberg he was informed that the king had prepared the letter of safe-conduct for him. Accordingly, Lord Venceslas von Duba proceeded to the imperial court at Spires to receive it for him. The rest of the party went directly to Constance through Southern Germany. In the towns through which they passed courteous kindness and respect were shown them, beyond their expectations. In each place the priests and learned men were engaged by the Bohemians in theological discussion. In Biberach, when the discussion on religious matters began, Lord John von Chlum took so prominent a part and spoke with so much warmth in favour of the doctrines of Hus—while Hus spoke little—that the citizens believed him to be a doctor of theology. Thereafter, Hus was accustomed, in his letters, playfully to call Lord John "the doctor of Biberach." Everywhere the teachings of Hus, given in reply to question or argument, were received with satisfaction. Such a reception, on the part of those who were personally strangers to Hus, shows how ready was the soil of the popular mind for the seeds of reforming truth.

On November 3d, Hus and his companions arrived at Constance. Hus was lodged in the house of "a good

widow, named Fida," not far from the pope's quarters. The house still stands, probably little changed, near the Schnetz gate of the city. A medallion with a bust of Hus and an inscription in Bohemian and German were placed upon it some years ago. From this house Hus never stirred until his arrest. Immediately upon his arrival, two of his protectors visited the pope and announced the arrival of Hus. The pope assured them that he would allow no one to molest him and that he would be perfectly safe at Constance. The disagreeable extravagance of his promises, however, gave good ground for suspecting his sincerity. A short period of freedom was, indeed, granted Hus. During that time he led the life of a recluse. His sentence of excommunication was suspended, not from any regard for him but that the city might not be subject to interdict on his account. He was enjoined not to attend public worship, to avoid scandal. At his lodgings he was left unmolested. He conversed with large numbers of persons who came to visit him. His attention was especially directed towards making preparation for the public audience before the council. With this object in view, he prepared two discourses. One was substantially a confession of faith, the other dealt with the peace and union of the Church. In the event, he was not allowed to deliver either of them, but they have been preserved in his works. He said mass daily in strictest privacy. Only from his little window did he watch the gay life of the city, which, for the time being, had become the intellectual, political, even social, capital of the world. Much that he saw, brilliant but worldly, must have roused displeasure in a man of his puritanic mind. He must have felt strangely isolated in the city of the council.

The Safe-Conduct. Two days after the arrival of Hus in Constance, Lord Duba brought the safe-conduct. As

City of Constance, showing Cathedral

Lodgings of Hus, Constance, on Hus Street

this document attained to scandalous notoriety through varied interpretation and explanation, it deserves to be given in full. It read as follows:

"Sigismund, by the grace of God, King of the Romans, etc.:—To all princes, ecclesiastical and lay, and all our other subjects, greeting. Of our full affection, we recommend to all in general, and to each individually, the honourable man, Master John Hus, bachelor in theology and master of arts, the bearer of these presents, going from Bohemia to the Council of Constance, whom we have taken under our protection and safeguard, and under that of the empire, requesting, when he arrives among you, that you will receive him kindly and treat him favourably, furnishing him whatever shall be necessary to promote and secure his journey, whether by water or by land, without taking anything from him or his, at his entrance or departure, on any claim whatever; but let him freely and securely pass, sojourn, stop, and return; providing him, if necessary, with good passports, to the honour and respect of the imperial majesty. Given at Spires, October 18, 1414."

How well the provisions of this safe-conduct were observed, the sequel will show.

The Arrest of Hus. The enemies of the reformer came to Constance in force. They had resolved upon his ruin and made ample provision to carry out their purpose. Foremost among them was John the Iron, Bishop of Litomysl, a notorious simonist and a very rich man. Venceslas Tiem, whose trade in indulgences in Prague had caused the outbreak of the crisis, the infamous Michael de Causis, Stephen Palec, who was to take a prominent part in the proceedings against Hus, and a dozen more were close upon the track of the reformer. Among the opponents of church reform in Bohemia they

had raised a considerable fund to push the prosecution of Hus. They engaged the services of many informers against him. They surrounded him with spies. With the bitter fidelity of fanatics, they dogged his footsteps. On the day after his arrival in the city, they placarded him on church doors as the vilest heretic. They used every artifice to increase prejudice against him and to neutralize his personal influence. They circulated a report that he was a dangerous mind-reader, who could divine the thoughts of those who attended his services—an absurd charge that may have been built up on the experience of some conscience-stricken offender, the secrets of whose heart had been made manifest under the preaching of Hus, as often happens in the course of faithful preaching of the Gospel. They bore it ill that he should enjoy even a limited measure of freedom. To bring about his arrest was the first step necessary to the success of their designs. With this in mind, they bestirred themselves. They ran hither and thither among the principal cardinals, archbishops and other prelates, pressing complaints against Hus. When a hay-cart was seen stopping before his lodgings, the spies immediately reported that he intended to escape hidden in it. Their agitation proved successful.

On November 28th, the cardinals sent two bishops, the burgomaster of the city and a knight to cite Hus before them. Lord John of Chlum, suspecting treachery, vehemently objected. One of the cardinals protested that they meant no evil. They only wished to proceed quietly and avoid a stir. Thereupon Hus, unsuspecting, declared himself willing to obey the summons. His hostess in great anxiety met him in the hall and wept as he gave her his blessing. While descending the steps the bishops said to him, "Now wilt thou no longer officiate or say mass." On leaving the house, he found the

street full of soldiers, who immediately surrounded him, mounted him on a poor horse and conveyed him to the episcopal palace, where the cardinals awaited his coming. They informed Hus that many complaints against him had been forwarded to them from Bohemia. Hus replied that he had come freely to the council and that if he were convicted of error, he would gladly accept instruction. "It is well spoken," said the cardinals, giving a meaning to his words which he never intended to convey. He wished to be convinced by reason and the Scriptures, not to bow blindly to the authority of the pope or cardinals or council. After the interchange of these few words, the cardinals retired, leaving Hus and Chlum in the hands of a guard.

After the cardinals had withdrawn, a monk of the Minorite order of friars approached to converse with Hus. His object was not at first suspected. In a friendly tone he addressed the prisoner, assuming the appearance of a simple-minded, ignorant man, anxious to gain instruction. In reality, he was Master Didacus, reputed in all Lombardy the most subtle of theologians. He came as the tool of the cardinals to entrap Hus while off his guard. Hus soon perceived from the nature of the man's questions that under a plain appearance he concealed a shrewd and penetrating mind. He charged him with pretense, "Thou sayest that thou art simple (simplex) but I say that thou art false (duplex) not simple." After the monk had left and Hus had learned the identity of his visitor, the reformer exclaimed, "Had I but known it! I would have plied him differently with Scripture. Were they but all like that, with God's aid and the Holy Scripture supporting me, I should fear none of them."

Late in the afternoon, the cardinals sent word that Lord John might depart but that Hus must remain in the

palace. Shameful perfidy! He was a prisoner in spite of the safe-conduct, in spite of the emperor's pledge and the pope's promise. From that hour he never regained his freedom. When his enemies learned that he would be detained, they gave expression to ignoble and indecent joy. Dancing round the room, they cried out, "Ha! Ha! now we have him, he will not escape us till he has paid the uttermost farthing."

Vain Protests of Chlum. The chivalrous Chlum, burning with indignation at the outrage, reproached the cardinals for their baseness. From them he rushed to the pope, reminding him of his promise and threatening to publish abroad how grossly the safe-conduct had been violated. Pope John coolly excused himself, saying that he was powerless in the matter, that "his brethren," as he called the cardinals, were quite beyond his control. "But he deceived him," pithily remarks the chronicler. Referred to the cardinals, Chlum went from one to the other. They gave him evasive answers or openly declared that no faith was to be kept with heretics. In desperation, the loyal friend of Hus turned to the people gathered about the palace. All in vain. Taunts and threats were the only response to his appeals for sympathy. "A madman and coward like Hus," said they, "was quite unworthy of such sympathy and friendship." The enemies of Hus had subsidized the dregs of the mob in their cause. By the spread of artful rumours and, probably, by liberal use of gold they had moved the rude populace to delight in insulting defenseless misery. Thus fruitlessly did Chlum spend the day.

Hus a Prisoner in the Dominican Monastery. Meantime, Hus was taken, in the evening, to the house of the precentor of the cathedral, where he was kept for a week,

closely guarded. Then he was removed to a Dominican monastery, situated on a small island in the lake and separated from the rest of the city by a very slender watercourse. From the windows of this building, the eyes of the monks could range over a wide expanse of placid waters and see, in the distance, the snow-clad peaks of the Appenzell Alps glittering in the sun or covered with soft, transparent veils of mist. But no such glorious prospect was to cheer the harassed soul of the reformer. In a round tower, a few feet from the water's edge, was an underground dungeon, dark and gloomy. Into this he was mercilessly cast. The sewer of the convent passed close by. The noxious stench of the place soon threw him into a dangerous fever, which brought him to the brink of the grave. The pope was not anxious that he should die a natural death. The noted heretic might be very useful in the pope's effort to divert the attention of the council from himself to the subject of heresy. Accordingly, physicians waited on the prisoner. It is said that the pope directed his own physician to attend him. By their orders, on the ground of professional humanity, Hus was removed to a more healthful cell and treated with less rigour.

He was held in the convent for two months and a half. He was not left undisturbed. While his friends were endeavouring to help him, his enemies, with equal energy and better prospects of success, strove to bring about his ruin. Through their influence, the council appointed a commission of three prelates to investigate and report on the case of Hus. For these commissioners Michael de Causis and Stephen Palec drew up a series of accusations based mainly on statements in Hus's treatise *De Ecclesia.* Some of these accusations were false. Others were skillfully and ignobly twisted statements of the reformer. With fiendish ingenuity, the foes seized on the moment

when Hus was weak through illness and depressed by the treachery of which he had been the victim as the favourable one to confront him with the commissioners and as many witnesses as possible.

Imagination can vividly picture the shameful spectacle of a straightforward, truthful man, as Hus was, attacked by such malicious adversaries. Weak and helpless though he still was, they worried him with questions. They came to him repeatedly. Once, when Hus's illness was at its worst, they brought fifteen witnesses into his prison on the same day. Hus felt how much he was at a disadvantage and begged that he might be allowed to employ an advocate for his defense. His request was sternly refused. A man accused of heresy, said the commissioners, had no right to expect the protection of the law. The refusal to allow Hus to secure a legal representative sealed his fate. So it was openly stated afterwards by John Gerson, one of the ablest members of the council. Thus handicapped, unfairly dealt with, pestered and persecuted, God only knew, as Hus himself wrote, what he suffered. Even so, it does not appear that his indefatigable foes caught their victim in any damaging or contradictory statement. The result of the investigation was that the commissioners drew up a new act of accusation, consisting of forty-four articles, all drawn from the treatise *De Ecclesia.* Mladenovic, the faithful diarist, says of them, "These had been falsely and unfairly extracted from the book by Palec, who had mutilated some sentences at the beginning, others in the middle, others at the end, and who had, also, invented things that were not contained in the book at all."

Efforts of Friends. The friends of Hus did not remain inactive. They continued to urge his liberation. The loyal Lord John was particularly energetic. He wrote

to the emperor, who did not reach Constance until Christmas, he besought the pope and the cardinals, he tried to rouse all Constance. But his efforts were fruitless. The emperor, indeed, sent a message requiring the immediate release of Hus and after reaching Constance, repeatedly and vehemently demanded of the cardinals—or pretended to—that they should respect the safe-conduct. But they remained inflexible. Faith, they claimed, need not be kept with a heretic. When intelligence of the imprisonment of Hus reached Bohemia, the Bohemian Council, voicing the indignation of the outraged countrymen of the reformer, addressed to Sigismund a letter of guarded but significant remonstrance. But Sigismund did not heed the warning. He was, doubtless, glad to know that Hus was safe under lock and key. He did not wish to offend the majority of the church council, who considered Hus a pestilent heretic and demanded that he be punished. In order that the council might not, over the case of Hus, be turned from its main object, the healing of the schism, he allowed his sacred word to be violated. He sacrificed Hus in the interests of that outward church unity which he blindly sought. Such treachery was bound to lead to evil consequences. It cost Sigismund more than he could foresee or imagine. It led to long and bitter conflicts. It came back to him in battles, defeats, panics, retreats, disgrace.

In one thing only Hus and his friends were successful. During the time of his imprisonment in the monastery, they were able to communicate with each other. In spite of the vigilance of spies, letters were passed by means of Polish visitors and the kind offices of one of the jailers, Robert, whom Hus had made his devoted servant and to whom he continually alludes in his letters as "the faithful friend," "that good man." The writings which issued from his prison cell attest his incessant activity,

even though he was enfeebled through disease and badgered almost daily by his enemies. His letters show that his trust in God and in the justice of his cause remained unshaken. They breathe a noble Christian spirit. Not even the harshness of his treatment provokes a single utterance inconsistent with his habitual gentleness. He wastes no time in cherishing resentments. Rarely has even martyr faith won more signal triumph than when in his trying situation patient endurance was crowned with grateful hope. He is divided between a calm readiness to die and a more or less positive hope of restoration to liberty. There is no trace of obstinacy. He is willing to listen to argument, to be corrected if he has erred. Yet he is true to his convictions. It would be difficult to find anywhere more decisive evidence of love of truth for its own sake than was shown in Hus. His letters do not suggest the self-importance of the leader or the pride of a champion. He possessed, indeed, a strong intellect, a fearless spirit, fervid eloquence, but his estimate of himself is humble.

Continued Literary Work. Besides letters, Hus penned, in prison, several short treatises, mainly for the benefit of the jailer, Robert. Like the jailer of Socrates, this man treated Hus with uniform kindness, was deeply moved by the patience with which he bore his sufferings and was led to adopt some of the reformer's views. Such treatises were on "The Lord's Prayer," "The Ten Commandments," "On Marriage," "which estate, please God, Robert is shortly about to enter," "On The Lord's Supper," written for edification rather than for controversy. Hus was, moreover, a watchful observer of the events that were happening around him. He took note of what was transpiring in the council and estimated shrewdly anything that might have a bearing on his own

fate. With tender solicitude he received and considered any tidings of the progress of the work of reform in his native land. He did not neglect to confirm, in his time of trial, the faith and devotion of his disciples at Prague. In that city theological reflection and discussion had become a more constant and all-absorbing occupation, in consequence of the intense interest felt in the fate of Hus. Not long after the departure of Hus for Constance, a new religious practice was introduced. Jacobellus of Stribro, one of the most prominent masters of the University of Prague and a friend of Hus, first publicly stated that, according to Scripture, the sacrament of Holy Communion should be received in both kinds by laymen as well as by priests. He and other priests began to dispense both the bread and the wine. Hus was consulted concerning the practice while he was in prison. He approved of it, and, thus, he took another step in the direction of evangelical liberty. But, while he rejoiced that his followers were departing farther and farther from the unscriptural rules and restrictions of Romanism, this matter complicated his case before the council where, in due order, it was reported to his discredit.

Work of the Council. All this time, while Hus was languishing in prison, with friends working for his release and enemies for his destruction, the council had been occupied with other matters. It had been opened, in November, with splendid ceremonial by the pope. When the emperor's presence completed the pomp and authority of the council at Christmas time, there was even more imposing religious service. Then followed endless negotiation between the pope and the emperor, between the pope and the college of cardinals, dissensions between the cardinals and the other members of the council. Daily congregations were held, at which the policy of

the council and the measures to be taken were earnestly, and sometimes angrily, discussed. The party of the pope and the party of the emperor and the cardinals played adroitly against each other for advantage. The question whether a pope was subject to the authority of a council or not was hotly debated. The party of the emperor and the cardinals was determined to devote attention, first of all, to the healing of the schism. The idea gained ground that all three popes should be set aside. Pope John tried to parry the blow. The foil he used was the heresy of Hus. Secret consultations were held outside of the council on the troublesome question of getting rid of Pope John. But they could not be kept secret from him. His paid spies ferreted out the proceedings of the most secret sessions. Busy hands were pulling the wires of ecclesiastical intrigue. Behind the scenes there were plotting and counter-plotting, bargain and sale, log-rolling and bribery, the details of which no history could record. Such was the council before which Hus was to plead his cause!

Notwithstanding all the efforts of the pope to the contrary, the council proceeded with the work of healing the schism. It was proposed to Pope John that, as the Good Shepherd had laid down His life for the sheep, he should by voluntarily resigning help the work of restoring the unity of the Church. This piously worded suggestion was not to the taste of Pope John. By every art and artifice, he tried to evade the issue. He answered vaguely. He promised and protested. He sought refuge in one subterfuge after another. But the struggle reached a crisis. He realized that his last throw must be made, particularly because his life of crimes and enormities would not bear investigation. He informed the council that he would yield and then he prepared to escape. He managed this very skillfully. Spies of the emperor and

the cardinals watched his every movement. He prevailed on his friend, Duke Frederick of Austria, to arrange for a tournament. While all were watching its proceedings, Pope John fled, disguised as a groom. His departure caused a panic at Constance. It seemed probable that the council would break up. By the energy and prompt action of Sigismund and certain leaders of the council, order was restored and the council continued its sittings.

The time of confusion was one of both peril and possibility for Hus. Of peril, because he almost starved to death. Food-supply, that appears to have been arranged for by the orders of the pope, was cut off when the pope's officers followed their master. Hus managed to inform his friends that his guards had fled. They found him faint and prostrate in chains. The situation, also, had its possibilities. Since the flight of the pope, Sigismund was the undisputed master of the city. It was entirely in his power to liberate Hus. Thereby he might have redeemed his word and wiped a foul blot from his name. But he turned a deaf ear to the entreaties of the Bohemians. In conference with the cardinals, he decided that Hus should be committed to the custody of the Bishop of Constance.

Hus at Castle Gottlieben. About four miles from the city, this prelate had a castle, on the Rhine, called Gottlieben. It had two quadrangular towers, nearly two hundred feet high. One of these is still called the "Hussenthurm." In the night of Palm Sunday, March 24th, Hus, heavily fettered, was taken in a boat to this castle. His imprisonment here was in every way a change for the worse. Immediately under the roof of the tower was a small wooden structure or cage, of two compartments. Into one of these he was thrust. His arm was pinioned

to the wall, at night his feet were chained to a block. In this miserable plight he remained for more than two months, suffering from hunger and cold and from painful attacks of neuralgia, hemorrhage and stone, brought on by the damp, spring winds that swept through the windows of the tower. His keepers were brutal. With his friends he could not communicate. For a time they did not even know what had become of him. It was the intention of his foes, according to the methods of the Inquisition, to break his spirit by long drawn out torture. It was hoped that thus he would be brought to confess anything which it was desirable that he should confess. His only visitors were the new commissioners appointed by the council, after the flight of the pope, to continue the examination of Hus.

They visited him several times at Gottlieben. There were men among them who would rather browbeat an invalid and argue with one too weak to defend his own cause than contend with the unimpaired, vigorous energy of thought and action that had electrified a whole kingdom. Upon the report of the commissioners, the council published a declaration, summing up forty-five articles of Wyclif that had been condemned at Rome two years before. As it could be shown that many similar statements might be found in the works of Hus, this was regarded as involving the condemnation of Hus, though he protested that he did not agree with Wyclif on all points. As the commission found Hus meek and patient but firm, his prison doors remained closed.

Pope John at Gottlieben. Once they were opened. It was to admit a second prisoner. He was none other than the deposed Pope John. The course of the fugitive had soon come to this pass. His friend, Duke Frederick of Austria, had been compelled to make his peace with the

"Hus Tower," in Dominican Monastery

Castle Gottlieben, on the Rhine

emperor on humiliating terms. Among other stipulations, he agreed to give up all support of the runaway pope. For a few days, the reformer, of unsullied moral character, and the wretched Pope John, convicted by the council on fifty-four charges and declared by it to be "the mirror of infamy, an idolater of the flesh and one whom all who knew him considered a devil incarnate," were fellow prisoners. History furnishes few instances of greater contrast, none more ironical in its final issue. The pope's punishment was a short term of imprisonment. After the close of the council, he made his peace with the new pope, Martin V, by whom he was again created a cardinal. Upon his death, in Florence, he was buried with all honour in a magnificent tomb, still admired by visitors to that Italian city. Hus, on the contrary, was acknowledged even by his enemies to be a man illustrious for his purity of life. But he dared to think for himself. His very virtues made it needful that he should suffer the hideous, painful death which the Christianity of the middle ages seems to have borrowed from Nero. Revolt against its system was the one crime for which Romanism of that day had no pardons to sell.

Public Hearing of Hus Arranged. In the ordinary course of events, nothing further would have been heard of Hus in his prison. He would have been left to languish there until his spirit was broken or until it would have been possible to destroy him secretly. But when the case of the pope was disposed of, the friends of Hus were resolved to secure the public hearing Sigismund had promised. The nobles in Moravia, assembled at Brünn, sent a spirited remonstrance to the emperor, in behalf of their countryman. A similar letter was dispatched from Prague by the assembled nobles of Bohemia. The two letters bear the signatures of almost all the men

then prominent in Bohemia and Moravia, excepting the dignitaries of the Church. The Bohemian nobles at Constance again bestirred themselves. Some Polish noblemen at the council seconded their representations to the council, demanding that Hus should be publicly heard. They wanted him released from custody, that he might recover his health for the examination, and they offered to provide sureties who would guarantee that Hus would not attempt to escape from Constance before his case was judged. The council absolutely refused to liberate Hus on any terms. The enemies of Hus did not even want to have a public hearing. They did all they could to prevent it. They dreaded to have Hus appear in person before the council. They knew the power of his eloquence and feared its effect. They had felt the blows of his logic, and in controversial discussions with him they had not come off with the prestige of success. But the politic Sigismund felt the imprudence, if not the injustice, of utterly refusing the demands of so many nobles of Bohemia and Moravia. The enemies were obliged to accede to a public hearing, as wrung from them by political necessities.

The Bohemian and Moravian lords had achieved a success—the only one in the long, and from the first, hopeless, campaign in favour of Hus. He was, at least, to appear before his judges. Though the proceedings at the trial proved to be anything but just, his public appearance and condemnation emphasized to all the world his lifelong protest against the tyranny and errors of the corrupt church.

VII

TRIAL AND DEATH OF HUS

THE Issue Between Hus and the Council. The circumstances of the trial and condemnation of John Hus present a curious and instructive contradiction. The council granted Hus a public hearing most reluctantly. It did so with the firm intention that he should be declared guilty and under any conditions prevented from returning to Bohemia. A helpless victim in the hands of his foes, his doom was predetermined. Hus, calm in conscious innocence, unshaken by all his misfortunes, could not but share the well-grounded fears of his friends. His mind was fully made up to meet the worst. His eyes were opened. He saw the great gathering of the leaders of the Church, representatives of its learning and its piety, swayed by gross injustice, clinging to traditions of human invention, stooping to the trick of fastening on his system articles which he had never taught and treating him as a common criminal. And yet the purpose for which the council had met and the cause for which he had laboured were the same—the reformation of the Church. And, furthermore, he had not gone further, nor been bolder in denouncing the errors and sins of the Church than had some of the fathers of the council who now sat in judgment upon him.

Why was it that he was rejected and they were honoured? Why was it that prejudice had built up between him and the council an impenetrable wall, as of granite, from which argument, appeal, remonstrance all re-

bounded? The principles from which the council and Hus, respectively, proceeded were different and irreconcilable. The one upheld the traditional authority of the Church, to which authority the individual must submit unconditionally in matters of faith, the other maintained the right of private research and judgment. The one wished to reform the Church out of itself and through itself, the other contended for a reformation according to the ideal of early Christianity as set forth in the New Testament. "Hus became a martyr not so much to his conviction of the untruth of current beliefs as because of his fidelity to conscience." He took his stand as a fearless champion of the supremacy of the Word of God over the traditions of men and of the liberty of conscience over the tyranny of authority. Few scenes in history are more touching or ennobling than that of the steadfastness with which he refused to swerve from conscientious convictions of truth, even to save his life. He "followed the gleam" to the end, not counting the cost. He emphasized the great modern idea that the force of truth lies not so much in unreasoning authority as in the appeal which it makes to a man's consciousness and conscience. This gives his last letters undying value and marks the rise of a new age. As a scholarly writer well points out, "A new spirit had arisen in Christendom when a man felt that his life and character had been so definitely built up round opinions which the Church condemned, that it was easier for him to die than to resign the truths which made him what he was."

This view of the case must be so far modified as to admit that there were other forces working towards the undoing of Hus. The bitter animosity of the Bohemian clergy whose wrong-doing he had mercilessly uncovered, the unceasing scheming of his personal foes, the antagonism of rival philosophical schools, the national preju-

dices of Germans and Bohemians strengthened by the German exodus from the University of Prague, for which occurrence Hus was held responsible—all these had something to do with his condemnation.

Hus Again in Constance. Shortly before the trial, Hus was brought back in chains from Gottlieben to Constance, where he was lodged in a monastery of the Franciscan Order. This was to be the last of his prisons. On arriving there, he found opportunity for resuming correspondence with his friends. From this it appears that Hus had not entirely given up hope as to the effects of the public audience. But whatever illusions on that score he and his friends may still have cherished were dispelled by a significant incident, which occurred at the very beginning of the trial. A congregation of the council had been summoned to meet in the refectory of the Franciscan monastery on the morning of June 5th. The intention seems to have been to satisfy Sigismund by a public condemnation, but in the absence of Hus himself. A document had been prepared enumerating the accusations against Hus and ending with the sentence of his condemnation. The accusations were being read out before Hus was admitted to the hall. A young Bohemian succeeded in obtaining a glance at the document and read the passage of condemnation. He reported the matter to the Lords Chlum and Duba, who lost no time in informing Sigismund. The latter immediately sent orders that nothing should be done until Hus himself was present. Thus the crafty plan was frustrated.

First Hearing of Hus. Hus was now introduced to the hall. So he had at last his desire and stood before the council. Very different was the reality from his dreams. He had expected to defend his doctrines to a

listening senate in an extended address. But, from the first, the sitting was a disgraceful proceeding. Articles of accusation were read from his book *De Ecclesia* and his writings against Palec and Stanislas. Hus contented himself with declaring that if there was anything evil or erroneous in his writings he was prepared to amend it. Then statements of witnesses were read. Hus attempted to reply, but he was interrupted with loud cries "as with one voice." He was obliged to turn now this way, now that to answer those who were crying out at him. He wished to show that certain articles drawn from his writings had been misrepresented. "Stop your sophistry, say, Yes or No!" some screamed. He cited the church fathers. The tumult became greater. When he ceased speaking, they exclaimed, "Behold, thou art silent, thou hast admitted thy errors!" Luther's comment on the scene is, "All worked themselves into a rage like wild boars; the bristles of their backs stood on end; they bent their brows and gnashed their teeth against John Hus." Amid all the wild confusion, Hus was not dismayed. He maintained a dignified bearing and showed a manly self-possession. When order had been somewhat restored, he remarked in a loud voice that rang through the apartment, "I supposed that there would have been more fairness, kindness and order in the council." The rebuke told. The more moderate members of the council were disgusted. To save the honour of the council, they demanded that the sitting should be adjourned and the trial continued on June 7th. That same night Hus wrote to his friends to reassure them of his constancy. This letter is remarkable as showing that Hus now discerned the real issue on which he would be condemned.

Second Hearing before the council. On June 7th, Hus was again brought to the consternation of all, the day

was ushered in by an eclipse of the sun. The superstition of the age regarded it as a strange omen. At Prague the citizens believed that the phenomenon foreshadowed the doom of their beloved master. Darkness covered the city of Constance, and lights had to be lit in the refectory of the monastery when the trial was resumed. Sigismund took good care to be present, so that better order might be maintained. Articles of accusation against Hus were again read out. Discussion turned, first of all, on the difficult questions connected with the Lord's Supper. Cardinal D'Ailly, famed as one of the most brilliant philosophers of the day, presided. This "Hammer of heretics," as he was proud to be called, thought it would be easy for him to smite down Hus with his searching questions and the vigour of pitiless logic. That Hus was a man of learning and not unversed in philosophical controversy, he certainly proved on this occasion. In this scholastic duel he was, undoubtedly, successful. He expressed his joy over his defense in a letter that evening.

Then witnesses were summoned, mainly Bohemians. The purpose of their depositions was to show the entire dependence of Hus on Wyclif. As the writings of the latter had already been condemned, the establishing of such a relation of Hus to Wyclif would be most convenient to the council, as involving a condemnation of Hus. Hus endeavoured to show that his approval of the doctrines of Wyclif did not imply his complete acceptance of all the teachings of the English reformer. He tried to define the difference between his own views and those of Wyclif on several subjects. But he was again interrupted by loud cries. Then, one by one, the old controversies and disputes were brought into court. Eight of the articles of accusation were read out on this day. When the article referring to Hus's appeal to Jesus Christ from the bull of the pope was read, it was received by the assembly with

jeers and mockery. In this as in other parts of the deliberation, the real issue between Hus and the council came to the surface. The council was jealous of its authority, as representing the authority of the Church. Its chief ground of complaint against Hus was that he disowned the authority of the Church and acknowledged no authority as final except the Scriptures, as they were clear to him. Members of the council had pulled an offending pope from his throne, but they were wedded to the doctrine of priestly authority. As they were now dealing with a professed reformer, they were determined to mark the limits of the reform they proposed to achieve. With them traditional authority of the Church had become a wall against freedom of conscience. As Providence has found other champions of liberty at like junctures, so in this case, Hus was found to have the intellectual and moral courage to break through stifling restraints, at the risk of his life, in order to open new paths for the onward march of God's people.

The session ended with the cardinal's advising Hus to unqualified submission to the council. "If you do this, you will best consult your safety and your standing." Such a course as the cardinal advised would have propitiated the council. Sigismund snatched at it as the right solution. If the prisoner would but admit the supremacy of the council, in all matters of faith, it would ease the situation. To that end he gave Hus some very plain advice. He strongly urged him to recant. He declared that he would grant no protection to "any heretic who is obstinately determined to stick to his heresy. So I counsel you to fling yourself on the grace of the council; the quicker the better, lest you fall into a worse plight." This Hus could not do, but he again expressed himself as willing to amend his teaching wherever it had been shown to be false, according to the Scriptures.

Third Hearing. After a sleepless night of pain, Hus was brought up for his final hearing on June 8th. An enormous mass of evidence against him had been collected by de Causis and Palec. Thirty-nine articles had to be read out. Twenty-six of them, extracted from his treatise *De Ecclesia* were first communicated. These had previously been shown to Hus and his replies noted down. It was easy for the accusers of Hus to show from these articles that the reformer had written strongly against the organization and administration of the Roman Church, as it was in his day. It was not so easy to convict him of heretical statements with respect to matters of doctrine, even though his accusers did not scruple to alter and distort his statements. One point of doctrine, in which the accusers found that Hus differed from the teaching of the Roman Church, was the difficult question of predestination. He was charged with saying that no outward sign and no high place and no choice of man could constitute one a member of the Church, but only the electing grace of God. Hus admitted the charge and illustrated his position by saying that Judas Iscariot, without this grace of God, was not a member, although he possessed all the other evidences. He further maintained that his opinions on this doctrine accorded with the teachings of St. Augustine. But the school of theologians that was most influential at the council was, secretly at least, hostile to many views of that saint. Some articles preferred charges against Hus on account of his sermons to laymen against scandalous priests and for celebrating the sacraments while still under the ban of excommunication. When an article was read which again referred to Hus's appeal to Christ, the mere mention of it was received with cries of derision. Evidently, it was a matter that rankled in the minds of his opponents.

The next series of articles, numbering seven, was

extracted from Hus's treatise against Palec. These accusations were very similar to the preceding charges. Only one of them was discussed at length. This article accused Hus of having stated that "if the pope, a bishop or a prelate was in the state of mortal sin, he was not pope, bishop or prelate." The answer of Hus was certainly imprudent under the circumstances. He said "Yes, and he who is in the state of mortal sin cannot either rightly be a king before God, as is shown by the Book of Kings, chapter IV, verse 16, where God, through Samuel, said to Saul, 'As thou hast rejected my word, I reject thee from being king.'" The enemies of Hus artfully brought this reply to the attention of the emperor, who was in the hall but just then conversing apart with certain nobles. Discussion of the point was prolonged that Sigismund might be duly impressed with what Hus had to say about unworthy rulers. Hus was not cowed. He proved himself more orthodox than his opponents. And he turned the tide of argument by asking, "If John XXIII was truly pope, why was he deposed?"

A further series of six articles, drawn from Hus's work against Stanislas, was read. These covered virtually the same ground as the former accusations. By this time, members of the council, who knew that the condemnation of Hus was a foregone conclusion, became impatient. Tumult again broke forth. His explanations, however Biblical, were disregarded. His protests against false charges met with scorn. "They pressed upon me, with threats and deceitful words to induce me to recant," he wrote to his friends in Bohemia. Yet amid all the crossfire of question and accusation, Hus maintained his calmness, his presence of mind, his secret repose in God and confidence in the truth.

At length, Cardinal D'Ailly announced the decision of the council. It was threefold: first, Hus should humbly

declare that he had erred in all the articles cited against him; secondly, he should promise on oath neither to hold nor teach them in the future; thirdly, he should publicly recant them. The cardinal then pointed out that two ways were open to him. He must submit humbly to the council, which, in consideration of Emperor Sigismund and his brother, King Venceslas of Bohemia, would treat him with humanity and kindness. (It appears to have been decided, in case Hus would recant, that he should, "in punishment of the scandal he had caused, be imprisoned for life in a Swedish monastery, in a cell that was to be walled up, leaving only a small opening through which food and drink were to be handed the prisoner." This cruel confinement would have represented the tender mercies of the council!) Should he, however, not consent to this submission and still wish to defend some of his views, a hearing would not be refused him, but he would thus act at his greatest peril. Hus quietly replied that he did not wish to maintain any errors, but that he could not, against his conscience and at the peril of his soul's salvation, say that he had held erroneous opinions which he never did hold. He only begged that he might be allowed to express his views regarding the accusations made against him. As this answer did not imply unconditional surrender, it was received with indignation. Various members of the council reasoned with him, urging that he follow the advice of the council. Sigismund, also, strongly admonished him to recant heretical views, even if he had never held them. This, of course, a straightforward man, like Hus, could not do. He was then reconducted to prison. No provision was made for any further hearing. On being led out, John of Chlum warmly pressed the reformer's hand. Hus was deeply touched that he did not disdain to salute him when he was spurned by almost all as a heretic.

At the end of the sitting Sigismund, not perceiving that the Bohemian barons were still present, urged that Hus should be burned alive, unless he recanted, and that in any event he should not be allowed to return to Bohemia; that wherever bishops found others holding like views they should punish them, so that they might be destroyed root and branch; that they should make an end of his secret friends and followers, especially his disciple, Jerome, who was then in custody. These words of Sigismund, spoken in an unguarded moment, cost him years of warfare and the Bohemian crown.

Sentence Delayed. Hus realized that there could be but one issue. He expected every day to be his last. But formal sentence was delayed a month. This was done, because hope was entertained by the council and Sigismund that Hus would, in the end, recant. They were anxious to obtain a professed penitent, whom they could then send away reduced to powerlessness by his recantation. Should Hus recant in any form, the fathers of the council would enjoy a moral triumph and Sigismund could be certain that Hus would lose entirely his prestige with the Bohemian people. To secure a recantation, therefore, they exhausted the resources of artfulness and argument. No effort was spared to shake the reformer's determination. He was visited by deputation after deputation, anxious to overcome what they thought the scruples of an overnice conscience. Learned doctors plied him with clever argument and illustration. Great fathers of the council went out of their way to offer him convenient "baskets," in which, as Paul, he might be "let down" over the wall. Some entirely friendly members of the council tried to show him that responsibility would be with the council, should he abandon the opinions which he formerly held. A number of prelates

urged him officially to take this step. His answer was a written declaration. On the day before his martyrdom, deputies of Sigismund made a last attempt. But to all their blandishments Hus stood firm. He steadfastly refused to swerve from the path which conscience had made clear. "I write this," says he in a letter to his friends in Bohemia, "in prison and in chains, expecting tomorrow to receive sentence of death, full of hope in God that I shall not swerve from the truth, nor abjure errors imputed to me by false witnesses."

The time of the month's reprieve, not beset by the importunities of those who pressed him to recant, Hus employed to prepare himself and his friends for the final result his own constancy had made inevitable. He was never idle. Chains, illness, heaped up wrongs and injustice, the prospect of cruel martyrdom did not cripple his energies nor check the wonderful flow of his teaching and preaching spirit. In these last weeks of his life, his letters are numerous and very precious. They portray his thoughts and feelings in that time of trying anticipation. They show him sometimes depressed but never flinching, loving his own life in the hope of future usefulness but more anxious for the truth he had preached and the cause he had promoted. Best known of all his letters is the one addressed "To the Whole Bohemian Nation."

In this letter he pours forth all the ardour of his affections and the treasures of his concern for the welfare of his people. His exhortations and entreaties are given in a manner that unites becoming modesty with a tone of apostolic fervour. Other letters were written to individuals, to groups of friends, to his fellow-labourers at the University of Prague. On one of them Luther comments. "Hus fights another battle between the flesh and the spirit over the confession of truth, a fight worthy of the knowledge of pious men." Some of the letters are note-

worthy because of the boldness with which Hus asserts his position, without a note of doubt or hesitation. He speaks plainly of the treatment meted out to him, of the inconsistency of his enemies, of the untrustworthiness of the council. But he does so without wasting time or strength in bitter reflections. As for himself, he prepares for death with the fortitude of the early martyrs. The ordeal that is drawing nearer leads him to Christ. He does not rely upon himself but upon divine grace. In one of his letters—Luther says of it, "In no letter does Hus rise to serener heights of resignation and conviction" —Hus includes this beautiful prayer, "O holy Christ! draw us after Thee. We are weak, and if Thou dost not draw us, we cannot follow Thee. Give us a strong and willing spirit, and when the weakness of the flesh appears, let Thy grace go on before us, accompany and follow us. For without Thee we can do nothing, least of all, suffer a cruel death for Thy sake. Grant a willing spirit, a fearless heart, true faith, steadfast hope, perfect love, that for Thy sake we may, with patience and joy, surrender our life. Amen."

Condemnation of Hus. That prayer was heard. This is shown in the experiences of the day on which he sealed his testimony with his blood. It was Saturday, July 6th. Early in the morning the council met in the cathedral, to give greater solemnity to the proceedings. A strong guard brought Hus to the portal. As soon as he had left the prison, the couch on which he had slept during his last days was burnt and the ashes were thrown into the Rhine. It was feared that the Bohemians would endeavour to collect relics of the martyr—so widely had the fame of his sanctity spread. Arrived at the cathedral, he was detained, as an incorrigible heretic, at the entrance, till the celebration of high mass was concluded.

Interior of Cathedral, Constance

Condemnation of Hus. (Brozik.)

On being led into the cathedral, he found in the middle of the church a small platform, temporarily erected. On it were a table and the vestments of a priest. Hus was assigned a place in front of the platform, where he knelt in silent prayer for some moments. As he then stood alone before the council, the scene was appalling. For some weeks he had been tormented by disease. The marks of suffering were on his brow. His face was pale. His cheeks were sunken. His limbs were weak and trembling. But his eye flashed with unbroken spirit. His words rang clear and true. All around him gleamed the purple and gold and scarlet robes. Sigismund sat on a throne near the high altar, with his courtiers around him clad in splendid armour and nodding plumes. Members of the council were present, almost without exception, robed in rich vestments and wearing jewelled mitres. And the rest of the vast cathedral was filled with spectators. Before this assembly an ordeal awaited Hus, calculated to torment his mind as severely as the fire would torment his body.

The judicial proceedings—if they may be termed such—began immediately. The Bishop of Lodi preached a short sermon on the text, "That the body of sin might be destroyed." This was to be accomplished according to the bishop's interpretation by extirpating heresy. Another bishop then read a report of the past proceedings, including the articles extracted as heretical from the writings of Hus. As the several articles were read, Hus attempted explanations, comments or denials as the case seemed to require. He was ordered to be silent. When he begged to be allowed to speak, his request was refused and the ushers of the council were ordered to compel him to be silent. He was, indeed, on this day granted hardly any hearing and treated with greater brutality than when he previously appeared before the council. We need not

wonder that his soul flamed out with indignation when we remember that one of the articles read out against him stated that he had claimed to be a fourth member in the Godhead. Hus demanded to know the name of the witness. It was flatly refused. Hus then said, "Be it far from me, that I should call myself the fourth person of the divinity ; such a thought could find no place in my mind." The reading continued, but so flagrantly untrue were some of the accusations that Hus made another effort to be heard. He did succeed in interjecting some comments. Moreover, he added, referring to the treatment he had received at the hands of the council, "I came here freely to this council, with a safe-conduct from my Lord the King here present, with the desire to prove my innocence and explain my beliefs." At these words a deep blush overspread the royal countenance. The incident was remembered. A century later, at the Diet of Worms, the enemies of Luther counselled Charles V to violate the safe-conduct granted the German reformer, citing the crime of Constance as a precedent. To the credit of Emperor Charles was his reply, "If honour were banished from every other home, it ought to find a refuge in the heart of kings."

After all the articles of accusation had been read and the statements of witnesses communicated, the council was minded to terminate the trial of Hus without delay. He was not allowed to reply. An aged bishop, of venerable aspect, mounted the pulpit and published the formal sentence. The writings of Hus, both in the Latin and Bohemian tongues, were to be committed to the flames. Hus himself was declared to be a true and manifest heretic, who was to be delivered over to the secular authorities for punishment. He knelt and prayed with a loud voice, "Lord Jesus, forgive mine enemies ! Thou knowest that they have borne false witness against me. Forgive them

for Thy mercy's sake!" At this prayer, many bishops frowned and a mocking laugh burst from their lips.

The ceremonies of degradation and deconsecration were then performed with all the childish formalities usual on such occasions. Hus was commanded to ascend the platform and array himself in the priestly vestments hanging there. Chalice and paten were placed in his hands. When fully robed he was exhorted to recant. Facing the vast assembly, he said with deep emotion, "Behold, these bishops demand of me that I shall recant and abjure. I fear to do this. For, if I complied, I would be false in the eyes of God and sin against my own conscience and divine truth; seeing that I have never taught what has been falsely charged against me, and that I have written and preached the contrary. There is another reason why I cannot recant. I would thereby not only offend the many souls to whom I have proclaimed the Gospel, but others also who are preaching it in all faithfulness." Thereat the bishops exclaimed at his wickedness and obstinacy. Then chalice and paten were snatched from his hand and the vestments were torn from his person, piece by piece, each with the outcry of some fearful malediction. Hus replied with words of faith and hope. A dispute arose over his tonsure. Some were for cutting it with shears, others clamoured for a razor. "See," said Hus to the king, "these bishops cannot agree in their blasphemy." The shears won in the unseemly wrangle; and the tonsure was cut in four directions. A paper cap, a yard high, was placed on his head. It was pictured with devils struggling for his soul and it bore the words, "Hic est heresiarcha." (This is the Arch-heretic.) As these ceremonies ended, the bishops said, "We commit thy soul to the devil!" To this Hus replied, "And I commit it to my most gracious Lord Jesus Christ."

Martyrdom. The emperor requested the Count Palatine to turn Hus over to the magistrates of the city to be burned alive forthwith. A large, armed force led him out, and a great throng of citizens and visitors in the city joined the mournful procession. From the cathedral Hus was taken through the churchyard, that he might witness the burning of his writings. The spectacle but provoked him to smile. He knew that, however many copies might be destroyed at Constance, there were far more at Prague and throughout Bohemia. Then he went forth to die. Soon the procession reached the fatal spot. It was a quiet meadow, known as The Brühl, among the gardens outside the city gates. When he came near the stake, he knelt and prayed the thirty-first and fifty-first Psalms with great fervency, so that the people were deeply moved. While he was thus engaged the paper cap fell from his head. One of the bailiffs replaced it with a brutal jest. Ordered to rise, he did so, saying, "Lord Jesus Christ, this cruel and terrible punishment I will cheerfully and humbly bear for the sake of Thy holy Gospel and of the preaching of Thy blessed Word!" He was then bound to the stake with moistened thongs and a heavy chain. Some bystanders remarked that his face was turned towards the east—an unseemly thing in the case of a heretic. Accordingly, he was turned to face the west. Faggots of wood and straw were piled around him up to the chin. Everything was ready for the torch. For the last time the imperial marshal, Pappenheim, accompanied by the Elector, approached to give him a chance to recant.

Loud and clear rose the unconquerable voice of the martyr, as he gave his last faithful testimony to the truth of what he had taught. "What shall I recant, not being conscious of any errors? I call God to witness that I have neither taught nor preached what has falsely been

Procession to the Brühl

Memorial Stone

laid to my charge, but that the end of all my preaching and writings was to induce my fellow men to forsake sin. In the truth which I have proclaimed, according to the Gospel of Jesus Christ and the expositions of holy teachers, I will, this day, joyfully die." At these words the nobles clapped their hands. It was the signal for the execution. The torch was applied. The agony was short. As the flames arose, Hus began to chant the Catholic burial prayer, "Christ, Thou Son of God, have mercy upon us." At the third line of the chant a gust of wind dashed the smoke and sparks into his face. His lips moved faintly in silent prayer, but the last words had been spoken. When the cruel flames died down, the executioners tore the ghastly corpse from the stake, hacked the skull in pieces and ground the bones to powder. These with every shred of clothing and the stake were reduced to ashes, and the ashes were cast into the Rhine. There remained not the smallest memento of the Bohemian reformer. But his countrymen dug out some of the earth at the place where the stake had stood and carried it as a sacred relic to their native land. A huge bowlder marks the spot. On it are graven the names of Hus and Jerome—who suffered martyrdom at the same place nearly a year later. Ivy and flowering creepers twine about the stone.

Character of Hus. Thus perished John Hus, in the prime of manhood, in the midst of his work, a noble man and a valiant confessor. He had died, says a Catholic writer, for the noblest of causes. He had died for the faith which he believed to be true. Another Catholic writer of that time, who afterwards became pope, testifies of Hus, "No philosopher ever suffered death with such constancy." Not many words are needed for an estimate of the character and work of this pale, spare

man, who completed the forty-sixth year of a busy life at the stake. The leading features appear from the narrative. His character and ability, finely balanced in the several elements and faculties, shine out beautifully in the fierce light of publicity and hostility that beat upon his life. Not his worst enemy has ever uttered a word of reproach against the purity of his character. As to his work—his theological writings; his powerful discourses glowing with love for souls, clearly and skillfully penetrating the merits of every question and unfolding it with ease to the mind of the hearer; his efforts to improve public worship; his great learning, especially, his familiarity with Scripture truth and, finally, his triumphant death assure him his place in history. His is the honour of having been one of the chief torch-bearers to kindle the Reformation and of having been one of the bravest of the martyrs who have died in the cause of honesty and of freedom, of progress and growth towards the light. His epitaph might well have been the words of Erasmus, "Joannes Hus, exustus non convictus"—John Hus, burned but not convicted. Luther writes of him, "If this man was not a noble, strong and dauntless martyr and confessor of Christ, then will it, indeed, be hard for any man to obtain salvation." Lechler, a German authority on the life of Hus, says, "Im Erliegen siegen, das war sein Los"—In defeat to conquer was his lot.

VIII

THE INFLUENCE OF HUS

DISTURBANCE in Bohemia. The executioner's torch kindled a conflagration in Bohemia that raged for years with consuming fury. When the news that Hus had been executed reached Bohemia the excitement was intense. Grief, indignation and resentment fired the populace. All classes were profoundly moved. In every Bohemian town and hamlet the people felt that their greatest man had been unjustly murdered. The burning of Hus made him the apostle and martyr of his nation. Many who had been undecided in their views, or timid in confessing them, openly joined his followers. Bohemians had been reluctant to separate themselves from the Roman Church. Events that followed the death of Master John Hus made that result inevitable. It was foreshadowed by disturbances that immediately took place. Tumults broke out in Prague. Many priests who refused to administer communion in both kinds were driven from the city, their houses were plundered, while Hussite priests took their places. The estates of wealthier prelates did not escape. The archbishop was besieged in his palace and obliged to flee in dismay.

National Movement in Bohemia. The Council of Constance endeavoured to restore order. It issued letters, justifying the execution of Hus, warning against his doctrines and threatening severe discipline. All this correspondence had little effect on the course of events. If

anything, it increased the commotion. The national movement began to assume a revolutionary character. Among its leaders were some of the nobles and knights of the king's court. The nobility of the entire country met without delay, September 2, 1415, to deliberate on the perilous situation of the land. They were joined by a large number of Moravian nobles. They sent a solemn protest to the Council of Constance. It was freighted with the burden of reproach and defiance that the nation felt towards the council. It affirmed the innocence and the orthodoxy of Hus and declared that he had been unjustly put to death. It characterizes him thus, "Living piously and gently in Christ, he both by word and deed strove most diligently to conform to the evangelical law and the teachings of the holy fathers, for the edification of the holy mother, the Church, and for the salvation of his fellow men." That was the opinion which the more enlightened and more pious of his countrymen formed of Hus's life and teaching immediately after his death. This document bore the signatures and seals of more than four hundred and fifty lords and knights.

The Bohemian patriots were too shrewd not to see that their bold attitude was fraught with grave danger. Three days after sending the letter to Constance, they formed the Hussite League. They bound themselves by a solemn covenant to unite in the defense of freedom of thought. They pledged themselves to allow free preaching of the Gospel on their estates, to accept no orders from the Council of Constance, to obey, in future, the pope and the bishops of Bohemia only in so far as their commands were in harmony with the Holy Scriptures, to resist all unjust bans of excommunication, to arrange for defense of the country, to regard the University of Prague as authority in matters of doctrine. Soon afterwards the lords favourable to the cause of Rome formed a Catholic League.

They were not numerous, but some of them were powerful. They pledged themselves to continue obedience to the Roman Church and its council. Encouraged by the speedy organization of this league, the fathers of the council persevered in their denunciations of the Bohemians and cited them to appear before the council on the charge of heresy. But their decrees were ineffective. The Hussites were not overawed. Little recked they all this parade of authority in the distant city of Constance. Three years passed without effecting any change. Bohemia and Moravia were still fired with excitement, which was ready at any moment to burst into flame. Feeling continued so long at high tension, because the people waited in vain that something might be accomplished at Constance in the direction of church reform. Work of that nature was postponed to the next council. Melancholy end of the splendid assembly that had, for nearly four years, deliberated on ways and means to purify the Church.

The university accepted the important functions conferred on it by the nobles. It proclaimed Hus a martyr of the true faith and ordained that July 6th should be observed annually as a memorial day in his honour. The theologians of the university formulated and issued the celebrated Four Articles of Prague, which set forth the Hussite doctrines and principles. These articles were the following:

I. The Word of God is to be preached, in a proper way, by the priests of the Lord, without let or hindrance, throughout the Kingdom of Bohemia.

II. The sacrament of the Holy Eucharist is to be administered, under each kind, of bread and wine, according to the institution of the Saviour, to all believers not disqualified to receive it by reason of mortal sin.

III. The secular dominion exercised by the clergy

over worldly goods and possessions, to the prejudice of their spiritual office and the damage of civil authority, is to be taken away from them, and the clergy are to be brought back to the evangelical rule and apostolic practice of Christ and His disciples.

IV. All mortal sins, especially such as are public, as also all other irregularities contrary to the divine law, in whatever estate they may appear, are to be punished by those to whom it pertains.

Hussite Preachers. While matters were unsettled in Bohemia and none could foresee what shape events might take, a peculiar feature of the Hussite movement developed. Itinerant evangelists appeared, preaching in private houses or in the open fields. They did an important work. For they preserved and spread among the people the doctrines of Hus. In their way, however, as will presently appear, they also added to the confusion of the times. Throngs crowded to hear them. Often whole congregations would undertake pilgrimages to distant churches or to open fields, where they might hear these men and receive communion in both kinds. A favourite gathering place was a certain hill, near Austi, which received the name Tabor. In the summer of 1419, an extraordinary meeting was held here. Solemn processions, carrying banners and the emblems of the Holy Sacrament, came from all parts of Bohemia and Moravia. A multitude of not less than forty-two thousand people was assembled. They extended to each other jubilant welcome. They had come to worship the Lord under the open canopy of heaven. They divided into numerous congregations of which priests took charge. Some preached, others heard confessions, others administered the Lord's Supper. At noon the entire assembly partook of a simple meal. The afternoon was devoted to religious

conversation and social fellowship. No levity was permitted ; the best of order prevailed. It was a primitive camp-meeting on a grand scale. Towards evening the pilgrims parted with mutual pledges to uphold the holy cause of the Cup and of free preaching. Similar meetings were subsequently held at the same place.

Hussites Divided. The Hussite preachers prosecuted their labours with ever increasing popularity. One after another of the Catholic clergy made common cause with them. Many churches were thrown open for the use of the Hussites and for the administration of the Lord's Supper according to the Scriptural form. But, unfortunately, discord soon broke out among them. Not much more than a year after the martyrdom of Hus, we behold the beginning of those differences of opinion among his followers which proved disastrous for the country and the cause of reform. Men can be more easily united in following a great leader than they can be by adherence to a common cause. Where many will steadfastly follow a leader, few will steadily follow a principle. So long as Hus was alive he was the rallying point for various elements among the Bohemians that favoured church reform. Now that his tongue was silent, his followers split into many contending factions. To some he was merely the fiery patriot, to others the enemy of the pope, to others the high-souled, moral teacher, to others the champion of reform. Had the people been united they might have gained their longed-for freedom and accomplished enduring church reform. But unity they lacked. No great leader rose after Hus to unite them on a definite scheme of church reform. And thus instead of presenting an unbroken front to the common foe, they were divided into sects and parties and made confusion worse confounded.

There were two principal parties, the Calixtines or Utraquists and the Taborites. (The two names of the one party had virtually the same significance. The name Calixtine was derived from *Calix*, the cup in the Lord's Supper, which cup became the symbol of all the Hussites, and the name Utraquist from the words *sub utraque*, that is the communion under both kinds. The Taborite party took its name from a fortified town, Tabor, which was founded by them and became their formidable centre.)

The Utraquists were the conservative and aristocratic party. They received their tendency from the University of Prague. Their aims were largely political. They continued to hold to the Romish doctrines and usages, except in so far as these were at variance with the Four Articles of Prague. They hoped for an eventual reconciliation with the Roman Church, after it should have been reformed and purified.

The Taborites were the progressive, radical party. Politically, they leaned to a republican form of government, with an abolition of all differences of rank. Theologically, their position was far in advance of the Four Articles of Prague. They accepted the Bible as the only source of faith and rule of practice. They acknowledged Baptism and the Lord's Supper as the only sacraments. They rejected purgatory, masses for the dead, worship of saints. They denounced images, relics, incense and fasting. Their principles were sound enough, but their system was marred by extreme views and fanaticism. They despised learning and art, they were loose in church discipline. For a time they had socialist ideas of property and revelled in pulling down churches.

Among various minor parties were the Chiliasts, who believed that the end of all things was at hand and that the millennial reign of Christ would soon begin, the

Adamites who attempted a return to conditions as they were in the Garden of Eden, and the Orphans, of somewhat later date, who occupied a position between the Utraquists and the Taborites.

Renewed Disturbance. These parties regarded each other with distrust. Together or individually, they had antagonized the Roman Catholic part of the population. Some Hussites had, in consequence, been imprisoned by the City Council of Prague. The government of King Venceslas, always weak and vacillating, was now more than ever inefficient. Disturbed and uncertain, indeed, were conditions in Bohemia. With no prospect of their improvement, they were hopelessly confused through an occurrence at Prague, of most alarming character and of momentous consequences. On a Sunday, in July, 1419, a monk, John of Selau, an enthusiastic Hussite and a man of great eloquence, had spoken strongly, in the church Maria-Schnee, of the oppression of the faithful. His hearers were greatly stirred. They proceeded to the town hall, led by Selau. On the way they attempted to enter the church of St. Stephen, one of those that had been closed against the Hussites. A struggle ensued, in which men were wounded on both sides. Matters became more serious when they reached the town hall. They demanded the release of their imprisoned brethren. For answer, stones were thrown by the councillors. One of the missiles struck the priest, Selau, who was carrying the sacrament in a monstrance. This infuriated his Hussite followers, for they considered it an act of sacrilege. A fearful tumult ensued. With John Zizka, formerly a courtier of King Venceslas, as a leader, the Hussites stormed the hall. The councillors were seized and thrown from the windows. Those who escaped the fall were cut down without mercy. Amid peals of alarm,

the riot spread to a considerable part of the city. When King Venceslas was informed of what had happened, he gave way to so terrible a burst of anger that he was seized with an apoplectic fit. A few days later he suffered a second attack, which ended his life.

The Crisis. In consequence of the death of the king, Bohemia was left in complete uncertainty. A crisis of extraordinary complications had been brought on. For twenty years the land became a boiling welter of disorder and strife. Sigismund, brother of King Venceslas, was heir to the throne of Bohemia. Naturally, most of the Hussites did not look upon him with favour. Some of the Utraquists were inclined to recognize him as sovereign, provided he would countenance their views, as set forth in the Four Articles of Prague. But he gave them evasive answer. The great mass of Bohemian people thoroughly distrusted Sigismund. They held him responsible for the martyrdom of the loved and revered Master John Hus. He did not come at once to claim his crown. Urgent affairs detained him in Hungary. Queen Sophia, widow of King Venceslas, was appointed regent. By the time Sigismund was ready to come to Bohemia, Hussite sentiment had become more united against him. Recognizing this, he wished to appear with so large an army that the country would be at his mercy, and that he would be obliged to make no concessions to any party. To that end he persuaded the newly elected Pope Martin V to inaugurate a crusade against the Hussites. A papal bull, proclaiming the crusade, was announced in March, 1417. Thus all Christendom was summoned by force of arms to crush the evangelical movement in Bohemia. But Bohemia was developing a power of resistance against united foes that exceeded their utmost preparations and calculations.

Hussite Wars. In the face of so great danger, the Hussites were able to unite on the program of the Four Articles of Prague. They could the more readily do this, as they all acknowledged the teachings of Hus, and these were still fresh in the memory of all. And they were all striving for the reformation of the Church, however much they differed as to method and character of the process. They found a remarkable leader in John Zizka. A greater general, a mightier man of valour, a more invincible leader never drew sword. He formed the rough Bohemian peasantry into a disciplined army. He originated novel tactics. He never lost a battle. He armed his men with lances, slings, iron-pointed flails and clubs and trained them to beat down the mail-clad knights of Europe. His iron-clad wagons he formed into barricades or sent them circling in murderous mazes round the field of battle. He had his men sing a stirring battle hymn as they marched to meet the foe, "Ye, who the Lord God's warriors are." He has been happily likened to Oliver Cromwell. With his forces, Zizka held the proud European armies at bay. One crusading army after another was ignobly defeated. After Zizka had succumbed to the Plague, in 1424, the Hussites, under their new leader, Prokop, began offensive campaigns and invaded Austria, Silesia, Bavaria, Hungary, Saxony, filling these countries with the terror of their name. All Europe stood aghast. Sigismund had to confess that Bohemians could be conquered by Bohemians only. At the Council of Basel, in 1433, the Utraquists and Taborites were adroitly turned against each other. After prolonged negotiations, the Utraquists accepted the Compactata of Basel, which practically conceded the principles of the Four Articles of Prague. The Taborites were dissatisfied. But their power was waning. Instigated by the Utraquists, the Bohemian nobility

formed a powerful league to restore peace in the land. By this league the Taborites were overthrown in 1434.

Thus ended the Hussite Wars. They had not been fought in vain. By holding at bay the crusading armies, they saved the Hussite cause from being crushed in its birth. Learned historians count the Hussite Wars among the few conflicts of the world that have been waged "not for material interests but for ideas." They were fought for faith and freedom, the faith of Hus and the freedom of Bohemia. This judgment of them holds, even though the several parties to these wars had but imperfect or limited conceptions of the teachings of Hus. The issue of the Hussite Wars, it is true, put Bohemia and Moravia into the hands of the Utraquists, and the Utraquist body, constituted the National Church of Bohemia, semi-Romish in character, after maintaining its independence for two centuries, was absorbed by the Roman Catholic Church. But the Hussite Wars, also, sheltered quiet, thoughtful men, in whom a truer and more spiritual conception of the doctrines of Hus worked like a silent leaven amid the clamours of war. The martyr-blood of Hus had not been shed in vain. In a better sense than that which Utraquism afforded, it was to be the seed of the Church.

The Unitas Fratrum. Amid the confusion and violence of the times, there were devout men of God, who did not take up arms, nor meddle in political commotion, nor give way to fanaticism. They fostered apostolic teaching, discipline and fellowship, true to the principles and practice of the Bohemian reformer, as set forth in his preaching and in his writings. They were the genuine followers of Hus and furnished the seed of the Unitas Fratrum. Dissatisfied with the semi-Romish National Church, of which they were members, they longed to promote the work of reform for which Hus had lived

and laboured. They were encouraged by Peter Chelcic, an earnest layman and forcible writer. He protested, with all the vigour of a Puritan, against the corruption and violence of the times, investigated the great questions of the age with independent mind, acknowledged no authority but the Scriptures. His system subordinated the doctrinal to the practical. This man exercised formative influence on their aspirations. His counsel led them to retire from Prague to the estate of Lititz, a hundred miles to the east, and begin an immediate reformation. This they did under the leadership of Gregory, called the Patriarch, a nephew of Rockyzana, who was at that time the head of the Utraquist Church.

On the estate of Lititz, in the midst of the dense forests and under the shadow of the Giant Mountains, these people founded their settlement in 1457. Among them were nobles and common people, priests and masters and bachelors of arts. Primarily, the idea was to form a Christian Association rather than a new denomination. Hence the name, Brethren, and, subsequently, the Unity of the Brethren (Unitas Fratrum) was adopted. Seclusion did not result in the cloistering of their interests. They were continually joined by like-minded persons. This, together with their lofty aim and the compulsive force of persecution on the part of the corrupt National Church, prompted them to place their organization on a more solid basis, both in doctrine and in practice. They were staunch people and true. As their organization gathered strength, they recognized that they had something worth the keeping and that they sustained weighty obligations over against their day and generation. Hence, they considered the propriety of separating entirely from the National Church and instituting an independent ministry. The latter they secured by epis-

copal consecration, in 1467, through the good offices of the Waldenses. Episcopal orders were the only form of ministry then known. Their validity, as secured by the Unitas Fratrum, the Roman Catholics and the Utraquists never questioned.

Four principles were adopted by the members of the Unitas Fratrum as the basis of their union. (1) The Bible is the only source of Christian doctrine. (2) Public worship is to be conducted in accordance with Scripture teaching and on the model of the Apostolic Church. (3) The Lord's Supper is to be received in faith, to be doctrinally defined in the language of Scripture and every authoritative human explanation of that language is to be avoided. (4) Godly Christian life is essential as an evidence of saving faith.

Gradually, the Unitas Fratrum attained to complete organization. A well ordered polity was worked out. The form of government tended towards the conferential type.

This church would never have arisen if Hus had not promulgated the principles which led to its birth. What he taught the members of the Unitas Fratrum reproduced in their confessions and catechisms. What he preached served their preachers as a model and furnished material for their lay-readers. The hymns he composed they sang with deep devotion, and they developed further the matter of congregational singing. The new forms in which he clothed his native tongue became chiefly their heritage and inspired them to diversified literary activity. The reformation which he began, they developed. The witness-spirit which he manifested, they upheld. From their membership there were many accessions to the noble army of martyrs. His weapons were wielded by them, viz., the two-edged sword of the Word and the whole armour of God.

Numerical increase of the membership of the Unitas Fratrum was rapid. When Luther appeared, the Unitas Fratrum embraced about four hundred parishes and two hundred thousand members. Its activities were diversified. Ecclesiastical resources were developed in various directions. The native genius of this Church continually asserted itself in practical evangelism. A thorough educational system was developed to fight ignorance, the fruitful mother of sin and error. Theological seminaries were established. A confession of faith was elaborated. Hymn-book, Bible and catechism were given to the people. The Unitas Fratrum enjoys the distinction of having been the first church ever to put a hymn-book into the hands of the people. The first edition bears the date 1501. A single copy of that edition is preserved in the library of the modern University of Prague. This Church, also, has the honour of having been the first to translate the Bible into the Bohemian vernacular from the original tongues. This work was a model of idiomatic Bohemian and remains a linguistic authority to the present day. Printing presses, operated by the Church, were busy multiplying copies of these works and of various theological treatises.

While building up their own organization, the members of the Unitas Fratrum did not neglect to cultivate a sincere spirit of fellowship with other evangelical Christians. At the beginning they found none with whom they might make common cause. When Luther became known, they entered into friendly relations with him and maintained them to the end of his life. Even more cordial were their relations with some of the other reformers, notably Calvin and Bucer. In their intercourse with these men, they benefited in the matter of clearer definition of doctrine and taught them, in turn, important lessons in church discipline. In 1570, they formed with

the Lutherans and Reformed of Poland—for the Unitas Fratrum had been established in that country—what may be termed the first evangelical alliance, based on the instrument of agreement known as the Consensus of Sendomir.

"Man proposes, God disposes." From the pinnacle of prosperity the Unitas Fratrum was plunged, in the inscrutable Providence of God, into the depths of adversity. The disastrous counter-reformation, which set in with the reverses of the Thirty Years' War, 1618–1648, all but crushed the Unitas Fratrum. There was left only the Scriptural "remnant." This from an expression used by John Amos Comenius, famous educator and last bishop of the ancient Unitas Fratrum, came to be called the "Hidden Seed." The traditions of the Church and the means of reconstructing its peculiar organization were preserved fresh and sound in the "Hidden Seed," ready to germinate, when the proper time should come, and grow to a mighty tree, stretching its branches to the uttermost parts of the earth.

In the event the "Hidden Seed" was transplanted to Saxony. There Herrnhut became the rallying place for the descendants of the members of the Unitas Fratrum, many of whom came from Moravia and thus gave the name Moravian Church to the modern Unitas Fratrum. The ancient discipline, handed down by Comenius, was introduced; the venerable episcopate was received at the hands of the two last survivors of a line of seventy bishops, extending from 1467–1735, and the Church of the Bohemian and Moravian confessors, concealed from human eye for three generations, renewed its youth like the eagle's. Invigorated with an infusion of new life from the evangelical Christianity of Germany, the Moravian Church was established, also, in Great Britain and in America, during the first half of the eighteenth century.

Foreign missions of this Church have extended to every continent and to many of the islands of the seas.

Conclusion. Thus the influences of the life and work of Hus have persisted. At first, they seemed destined to perish amid the confusion and complications of many conflicting issues. Really, they were gathered up and absorbed by various parties and bodies. And there still outlives all the centuries of revolution one organized result of the Bohemian reformation and the Hussite movement in the Moravian Church, in which errors and extravagances have been purged and true Christian excellences have been preserved. Wherever the Moravian Church is established there is annual commemoration of July 6th, the day of the martyrdom of John Hus.

This year, particular interest attaches to the John Hus Memorial Day, for it will mark the rounding out of a full five hundred years since the heroic martyrdom of the Bohemian reformer. The occasion will be widely and generally observed, for the life of Hus is a part of universal history as truly as is the life of Luther, of Calvin, of Zwingli, of Cranmer, of Wesley. In Bohemia elaborate preparations have been made for a dignified commemoration of the notable anniversary.

Well may there be such worthy observance, in obedience to the impulse to honour past achievement. The memory of a great and good man should not perish. It is worth too much to the living age to be suffered to go with him to the grave. The arts that are lost are lamented. But it is less a calamity to lose arts than the memory of large-hearted and great-souled men. The memory of Hus's completed activity has now blessed us a full five hundred years. The towering excellence of the man, his unselfish devotion, his large and generous aims, his pure passion for mankind have yielded abundant in-

struction and inspiration. The good and the great have an immortality on earth that death cannot touch. Paul is dead. But his voice is heard over the graves of martyrs; it penetrates the black night of pagan lands and makes them resound with salvation. Luther is dead, but his great soul marches on in the Reformation. Calvin is dead, but his hand has a powerful hold on the intellect, the heart and the conscience of the Christian world. Hus is dead, but his spirit lives in the efforts of humanity to emancipate itself from the chains of spiritual oppression, in the struggles of mankind for soul-liberty, of which he was one of the noblest expounders.

For all Thy saints, O Lord,
Who strove in Thee to live,
Who followed Thee, obeyed, adored,
Our grateful hymn receive.

For all Thy saints, O Lord,
Accept our thankful cry,
Who counted Thee their great reward,
And strove in Thee to die.

—*Hymn in the Memorial Liturgy of the Moravian Church for the Death-Day of John Hus (July 6, 1415).*

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